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ABSTRACT

The principles of the Montessori theory of inner discipline are discussed and evaluated through examination of the writings of and about Maria Montessori. The principles are also discussed in relation to available empirical and descriptive research concerning discipline. The principles of inner discipline may be summarized as follows: The child is a man deserving of respect. He has an inner power which forces his expansion, and his will leads him to develop his abilities. The teacher acts as a loving observer of the child, who does not impart what is hers but rather develops that which is within the child. The teacher prepares the environment in which concentration can be begun and carried out, and in which obedience can be cultivated through the gentle training of the will. Once the child has begun to concentrate, the teacher does not interrupt him. Discipline is an on-going process dependent on personal freedom. It is brought about through an inner force developed in the child by spontaneous interest in and concentration on an external object (work). The child thus learns to move about actively and purposefully rather than wildly or apathetically. He finds his satisfaction in the need to produce and perfect his own work; this is his inherent and only reward, a reward which eliminates the need for punishment. (Author/NH)

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AN ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF THE MONTESSORI THEORY
OF INNER DISCIPLINE

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate the characteristics of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline through the writings of Maria Montessori, through the material written about the Montessori Method, and in the light of current disciplinary usages. It is written in an attempt to provide at least a partial answer to the present disciplinary dilemma on the current American scene.

Background

As a beginning teacher, more than fifteen years ago, the writer was disturbed by the attitudes and actions of many teachers in their day-to-day contacts with children. It seemed that the children were considered to be lesser beings than adults, needing to be repressed and often humiliated. The situation was, to put it mildly, something less than humanitarian.

Within the writer the injustice of it all seethed and an accidental discovery of an article about Maria Montessori opened the floodgates. Here was a woman who had writhed under the inhumanities foisted upon children by "well-meaning" adults. Here was a woman who had done something about it.

It was at this time that the seed for this study was planted and then nurtured through the years by such statements as, "The links between her

contribution and some growing bodies of empirical knowledge are still largely unexplored,"¹ or, "A close look will indicate that there is no textually sound and easily available edition of Montessori's works for an American audience. There exists no adequate and detailed study of her work and no technically supported results of her experiments throughout the world. Above all, Montessori's thought and accomplishments have not been subjected to careful analysis or related to other important educational thinkers and movements."²

It seemed that Americans needed and wanted "their own variation on the basic Montessori theme."³ It was this that the writer felt increasingly compelled to do.

A brief look at the life of Montessori provides background information for and understanding of her method and shows the influence of her remarkable medical career on its initiation.

Maria Montessori, M.D., D.Litt. Ph.D., Officer of the Legion of Honor, Officer of the Order Orange-Nassau, F.E.I.S. (Edinburgh), was born August 31, 1870, at Chiaravalle, Ancona, Italy, the only daughter of Chevalier Alessandro Montessori and Renildo Stoppani.⁴

¹Riley W. Gardner, "A Psychologist Looks at Montessori, "Elementary School Journal, LXVII (November, 1966), p. 72.

²Urban H. Fleege, Building the Foundations for Creative Learning (New York: American Montessori Society, 1964), p. 18.

³Ibid., p. 42.

⁴Lucile Perryman et al, Montessori in Perspective (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1966), p. 66.

She graduated from the School of Medicine of the University of Rome in 1894, the first woman in Italy to do so. It was not until 1899 that she began her studies of educational problems with defective children.

Her methods in dealing with defectives were largely from Seguin, although she admitted being influenced by Froebel and by experimental psychology.⁵ Working on these lives, she achieved amazing results, preparing some of the children under her tutelage to pass the state examination in reading and writing.

At this time she established the world famous Casa dei Bambini in Italy. Here, to normal children, she applied her methods of working with defective children, hoping to have better results. Her hopes were justified.

Before beginning her work with defectives, she had visited the schools of Europe and was appalled to note that everywhere children were reduced to immobility in the classroom. As she often described such children, they were not disciplined but annihilated.

In her work, she discovered that undisciplined children became settled through spontaneous work and that their span of concentration could sometimes be extended from a quarter of an hour to an hour.

She required the teacher (directress) to provide the necessary didactic materials and show their use, but insisted that the children handle them for themselves. Certain "periods of sensitivity" corresponding to certain ages

⁵Luella Cole, A History of Education: Socrates to Montessori (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1950), p. 565.

exist, she contended, when the child's interest and mental growth are best suited to acquiring certain specialized knowledge. Some of the children in the Casa learned to read, write and count before six.

She was much before her day in psychological understanding.⁶ In Virginia Fleege's synthesis of the objectives of her method, this is very apparent.

These follow:

1. Developing in each child a positive attitude toward school.
2. Helping each child develop self-confidence as an independent person.
3. Assisting each child in building a habit of concentration.
4. Fostering in the child an abiding curiosity.
5. Developing habits of initiative and persistence.
6. Fostering inner security and a sense of order in the child.
7. Helping the child develop his sensory-motor skills.
8. Sharpening his ability to discriminate and judge.
9. Helping the child develop socially.
10. Helping the child develop his creative intelligence and imagination.⁷

In brief, each child is helped to develop within himself the foundational habits, attitudes, skills, appreciations, and ideas which are essential for a lifetime of creative learning.

Having conceived and applied her method, she accepted a chair at the University of Rome, where she lectured on pedagogical anthropology from 1900 to 1907. Dr. Montessori, however, never ceased her interest in the Casa dei Bambini. By this time there were many more than the original one she had founded

⁶Phyllis Wallbank, "Montessori Now," Times Educational Supplement, No. 2184 (March, 1957), p. 415.

⁷Virginia Fleege, Standard Operating Procedures for a Montessori School (Oak Park, Ill.: Oak Park Montessori Child Development Center, 1966), pp. 2-3.

and she continually observed, studied, revised, and improved the new method she had conceived. "I am willing to see those who are in search of truth," said Dr. Montessori, "but many come out of curiosity or with a passion for the new and unusual. I cannot meet these purloiners of time. If I saw all callers and answered all letters, I should have no time for experiment and study, and my system is not yet completed."⁸

In 1912 she wrote The Montessori Method, the first book in a long series of prolific writings. This precipitated the establishment of the Montessori Research Institute of which she was director.

She extended her method to London in 1919 where she held a training course. Subsequently she conducted courses in Spain, Holland, India, Scotland and Ireland.

In 1922 she was appointed as government inspector of schools in Italy.

Shortly before this she visited America as guest of the family of Thomas Edison. At this time an American Montessori Society was formed under the presidency of Alexander Graham Bell, the honorary secretary being the daughter of the then president, Miss Margaret Wilson.

Five thousand people, with hundreds turned away, attended a lecture which she gave at Carnegie Hall. Chicago made her an honorary member of the Academy of Science.

It was the year of the San Francisco World Exhibition. Montessori was quick to seize the opportunity this presented for making her method better known....For the whole duration of the exhibition a Montessori

⁸Florence Ward, The Montessori Method and the American School (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1913), p. XIII.

class, in a specially constructed room with glass walls, was carried on.... The glass room was surrounded by specially arranged seats from which hundreds of people at a time could watch the children at work.⁹

Montessori did not remain in the United States, however. The Associated Press states:

The United States has angered Dr. Maria Montessori, the world-known educator. She has returned to Italy under the patronage of Mussolini to carry her theory of individual education into practice in the high schools.

Until recently Dr. Montessori said she was pleased with the United States. Educators had accepted her method. There were ten thousand Montessori teachers in America.

'But now,' she said, 'people who were formerly my assistants and lieutenants are using my method in whole or in part and putting their own names or other names on it. They have taken my ideas and are making profitable use of them without giving me or the Montessori method credit.'

'But what can I do? My method is not patented. They are legally free to do as they like.'¹⁰

The demise of the method in the United States followed shortly after Montessori returned to Italy. In a study of the rise and fall of the Method in the United States in the early twentieth century the following are listed as causes:

1. Many educators (Dewey, Kilpatrick, Shaw and Morgan) thought the system was: (a) based on an outgrown faculty psychology; (b) a plan of sense training of doubtful psychological validity; and, (c) involved in too early a start in the formal arts of learning.
2. The cost and complete reliance on didactic materials and on the 'prepared environment' did not appeal to administrators and tax payers.

⁹E.M. Standing, Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work (New York: New American Library of World Literature, 1962), pp. 62-63.

¹⁰"Madame Montessori and American Imitators," Elementary School Journal, XXV (April, 1930), p. 570.

3. Educators and parents objected to the lack of artistic expression, fairy tales, dramatics, make-believe, field trips, and doll corners in the Montessori system.

4. Some critics had reservations about the Montessori system because they felt it was Catholic-oriented.

5. There is little doubt but that the treatise by William Kilpatrick 'disproved her' as far as many educators were concerned. Probably one of Kilpatrick's most serious indictments against her system is that it 'had the spirit but not the content of modern science.'

6. John Dewey's philosophy of progressive education seemed to fit the American conception of democracy much better than the philosophy of Maria Montessori.

7. Many parents and educators felt a system derived from work with the mentally defective and culturally deprived child was not appropriate for normal children.

8. The lack of qualified teachers (directresses) and the quality of the teacher-training program limited the spread of the movement.

9. The method was European based - too far from the mainstream of American thought.

10. The Montessori movement was poorly timed for adoption by American schools: (1) John Dewey's progressive movement was more in keeping with the social evolution taking place in this country. (2) There was already a well-founded kindergarten movement in the United States (3) Educators were in the process of updating the Froebelian principles. (4) World War I intervened to tax the economy and energies of the people.¹¹

Near the end of her life, in 1951, she came to the United States again to attend an international conference of Montessorians. Tributes were paid to her by the representatives of many nations. She set them aside with firmness "which showed her own awareness of the dangers of a personal cult. In a speech in which her astringent wit, tempered by good humor, saved the meeting from emotionalism, she urged her followers to look beyond herself to the vision

¹¹Mary Lorene Wills, "Conditions Associated With the Rise and Decline of the Montessori Method of Kindergarten-Nursery Education in the United States from 1911-1921," Dissertation Abstracts, XXVII (1966-67) 2841-A.

which she had consistently expounded."¹²

Maria Montessori died in Noordwijk, Netherland, on May 6, 1952, at the age of eighty-one. She suffered only a very short illness and, in fact, took care of some correspondence on the very day of her death.

The best description of her character is in her own works. "It has been said that a child who was exposed to nothing but the Montessori method during his preschool and school years would emerge as an individual cast in the same mold as Madame Montessori herself: scientific, precise, objective, accurate, unemotional, independent, vigorously individual."¹³

In A History of Education: Socrates to Montessori, Luella Cole includes her as one of the world's great teachers.¹⁴ Popularly (Time Magazine), she was even hailed as the founder of progressive education.¹⁵ If she was not this, she was, at least, "the first one to give the world a rational theory of education based upon true biological, anthropological, and sociological laws, together with the concrete embodiment of the theory in a set of material which has been tested by years of study and experience."¹⁶

What some historians of education credit William Heard Kilpatrick, or, perhaps, John Dewey, with killing, turns up currently to be very much alive:

¹²"Montessorian Attitude: Freedom under Authority," Times Educational Supplement, MDCCCLXXXII (May 25, 1951), p. 415.

¹³Cole, op. cit., p. 574.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 563.

¹⁵"First Progressive," Time, L (October, 1947), p. 56.

¹⁶Ellen Yale Stevens, A Guide to the Montessori Method (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1913), p. 19.

the Montessori Movement in America.¹⁷

Nancy Rambusch was the "dynamo" who started it again. She opened the Whitby School in suburban Greenwich, Connecticut, in 1958, which set off widespread fanfare about a school where preschoolers were already learning the three R's. "Its old Montessori methods turned out to be a showcase of nearly every 'new idea' that United States educators had lately discovered."¹⁸ Since then Montessori schools have mushroomed from coast to coast. The success or failure of this new movement remains yet to be seen.

Nevertheless, the Montessori Theories, especially that of Inner Discipline, must live on. "There is no need to claim that the Montessori Method offers only the choice of accepting it as a whole with all its parts intact, or of rejecting it altogether."¹⁹ Its best friends are those who submit it, piecemeal, to the test of careful scrutiny.²⁰

Perhaps the philosophy itself, even in the absence of the expensive apparatus can contribute substantially to the contemporary scene. The principles underlying this philosophy will be the concern of the next chapter.

¹⁷Gilbert Donahue, "Montessori and American Educational Literature, an Unfinished Chapter in the History of Ideas," Paper presented at 1st American Montessori Society Seminar, Greenwich, Conn., 1962, p. 1.

¹⁸"Joy of Learning, Whitby School," Time, LXXVII (May, 1961), p. 63.

¹⁹Emma Plank, "Reflections on the Revival of the Montessori Method," Journal of Nursery Education, XVII, (May, 1962), p. 45.

²⁰Ward, op. cit., p. VII.

CHAPTER II

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE MONTESSORI THEORY OF INNER DISCIPLINE AS DERIVED FROM THE WRITINGS OF MARIA MONTESSORI

Introduction

Maria Montessori never left a "single, systematized account of the principles behind her methodology",¹ but she did leave a plethora of books, articles, and manuscripts of lectures. In these, however, the language barrier defies translation for the Anglo-Saxon reader who needs someone of her own enlightenment to "rethink her thoughts"² in his cultural and educational persuasion. Maria Montessori herself posited the problem in this manner: "It is always very difficult for me to set forth my argument, because this argument is not a simple conception like a line, but it is immense, if you will, like a desert or an ocean. So it is very difficult for me to know just what I can do in order to give you what I would, for I do not myself know the extent of this greatness."³

¹Aubert J. Clark, "Montessori and Catholic Principles," The Catholic Educational Review, IX (February, 1962), p. 74.

²Sheila Radice, The New Children: Talks with Doctor Maria Montessori, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1920) p. X.

³Maria Montessori, Reconstruction in Education, (Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1948), p. 1.

Disarming to the researcher, too, is her use of mystique. She easily refers to a "mysterious inward impulse"⁴ or to a "sort of miracle occurring in the inner life of each child"⁵ - both baffling references for the reader. At another time she speaks of "order which came from mysterious, hidden, inner directives"⁶ and, again, of the "mysterious will that directs the child's formation."⁷ Despite this mystique and beneath the "many rhetorical generalizations and charmingly described episodes," the techniques are fresh⁸ and from them can be formulated several not-so-explicitly-stated principles.

Discipline Through Liberty

To Maria Montessori the most important problem humanity faced was that of educating the child,⁹ yet the fundamental problem of education, the education of character, was neglected by the schools.¹⁰ It was through her theory of "discipline through liberty"¹¹ that she meant to meet the crying educational need of the time - character development. In The Montessori Method she clearly stated:

⁴Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, trans. Mary A. Johnstone (2nd Edition; Madras, India: Kalakshetra Publications, 1958), p. 385.

⁵Maria Montessori, "Disciplining Children," McClure, XXXIX (May, 1912), p. 96.

⁶Maria Montessori, The Formation of Man, trans. A.M. Joosten (Madras, India: Theosophical House, 1955), p. 44.

⁷Ibid., p. 21.

⁸Emma Plank. op. cit., p. 40.

⁹Maria Montessori, The Child, (India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1961), p. 8.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 6.

¹¹Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, (New York: Schocken Press, 1912), p. 86.

Discipline must come through liberty. Here is a great principle which is difficult for followers of common-school methods to understand. How shall one obtain discipline in a class of free children?...If discipline is founded upon liberty, the discipline itself must necessarily be active. We do not consider an individual disciplined only when he has been rendered as artificially silent as a mute and as immovable as a paralytic. This is an individual annihilated, not disciplined.¹²

Dr. Montessori took great pains in defining the liberty of which she spoke because she felt that educators had "the same concept of liberty which animates a people in the hour of rebellion from slavery or perhaps, the conception of social liberty which signifies...the liberation of a country."¹³ She asked the educators of her time to consider her definition of liberty and to realize that the one single educational problem facing them was: How are we to give the child liberty?¹⁴

To Maria Montessori, liberty was synonymous with activity;¹⁵ the need for the latter she equated with the need for food¹⁶ for with "healthy, growing children activity is the normal state of being. To be forced into physical inactivity is one of the most severe punishments one can administer to children. And yet, teachers insist that children remain physically inactive for long periods of time in the classroom."¹⁷ So she assailed tradition over and over,

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁴Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, trans. Florence Simmonds (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Robert Bentley, Inc., 1964), p. 5.

¹⁵Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 86.

¹⁶Maria Montessori, The Child, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁷Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential, (Madras, India: Kalakshetra Publications, 1956), pp. 15-16.

built on the premise that good not be confounded with immobility and evil with activity.¹⁸

It distressed her to see teachers "almost involuntarily recall children to immobility without observing and distinguishing the nature of the movements they repressed."¹⁹ One day, a child who was considered abnormal because of the uncoordinated movements he made, set about, with great interest, moving tables. Immediately he was halted in his activity because he was making too much noise. This was "one of the first manifestations in this child of movements that were coordinated and directed toward a useful end, and it was therefore an action that should have been respected."²⁰

At another time a child, interested in helping the teacher arrange certain materials, was told to return to his seat. The child had merely tried to be helpful; for him the time had been ripe for a lesson in orderliness.²¹

Madame Montessori used the analogy of a scientist assigned to do further research with hymenoptera in describing inactive children. "He is shown a glass-covered case containing a number of beautiful butterflies, mounted by means of pins, their outspread wings motionless....With such material as this, the experimental scientist can do nothing." To force children to be inactive, "to rob them of the spontaneous expression of their personality till they are almost like dead beings," is to treat the children "like butterflies, mounted

¹⁸Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 93.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 90-91.

²⁰Ibid., p. 91.

²¹Ibid.

on pins, fastened each to his place, the desk, spreading the wings of barren and meaningless knowledge which they have acquired."²²

In one of her few sarcastic moments, she ridiculed the amount of scientific expertise wasted on the development of the stationary desk - that mechanical device which fostered the continuation of the principle of slavery to pervade the common-schools. "It is the conquest of liberty which the school needs, not the mechanism of a bench."²³

To Maria Montessori liberty was synonymous with spontaneity.

"We cannot know the consequences of suffocating a spontaneous action at the time when a child is just beginning to be active: perhaps we suffocate life itself," she said.²⁴

She acknowledged that the general belief among educators was that "the way to attain satisfaction is to 'learn something' "²⁵ from a person so designated to "teach something," but said rather, "It is precisely necessary that nobody interfere in obstructing the spontaneous activity of the children in an environment prepared so that their need for development can find satisfaction."²⁶ The school not permitting "the free, rational manifestations of the child"²⁷ and the school which "arrested the spontaneous movements with

²²Ibid., p. 14.

²³Ibid., p. 15.

²⁴Ibid., p. 87.

²⁵Ibid., p. 357.

²⁶Maria Montessori, The Formation of Man, op. cit., p. 44.

²⁷Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 15.

the imposition of arbitrary tasks"²⁸ was a lifeless mimic of that in which the children could be nurtured in "their natural method of spontaneous self-development."²⁹

To Maria Montessori liberty was synonymous with individuality.

"It is remarkable how clearly individual differences show themselves.... The child, conscious and free, reveals himself."³⁰

Dr. Montessori contended that the teacher had to study the child as an individual³¹ and that she must also "give such help as to make it possible for children to achieve the satisfaction of their own individual aims and desires."³² For the child to become aware of this individuality was the birth of manhood within him.³³

To Maria Montessori liberty was further synonymous with independence.

"The first form of educational intervention must tend to lead the child toward independence....His spontaneous manifestation will become clear, with the clearness of truth, revealing his nature."³⁴

The child, because of the peculiar characteristics of helplessness with which he is born, and because of his qualities as a social individual is circumscribed by bonds which limit his activity....An educational method that shall have liberty as its basis...must be such as shall help him to diminish, in a rational manner, these social bonds, which limit his activities....³⁵ In reality, he who is served is limited

²⁸Ibid., p. 88.

²⁹Ibid., p. 357.

³⁰Ibid., p. 95.

³¹Ibid., p. 28.

³²Ibid., p. 97.

³³Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, trans. Claude A. Claremont (3rd Ed/; Madras, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1961), p. 272.

³⁴Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method,

³⁵Ibid.

in his independence. This concept will be the foundation of the man of the future; 'I do not wish to be served, because I am not an impotent.' And this idea must be gained before men can feel themselves to be really free.³⁶

Dr. Montessori told of once observing a very small child's frustration over his inability to see the objects a large group of children were gathered about. Seeing a chair, he started toward it to stand on it and thus be able to see, but the teacher picked him up and held him over the group in full vision of the objects. "Undoubtedly the child, seeing the toys, did not experience the joy that he was about to feel through conquering the obstacle himself"³⁷ The man who, through his own efforts, is able to perform all the actions necessary for his own comfort and development in life, conquers himself, and in doing so multiplies his abilities and perfects himself as an individual....We must make the future generation powerful men, and by that we mean men who are independent and free."³⁸

The liberty that Maria Montessori defined as analogous to activity, spontaneity, individuality, and independence had limits, and these limits she underscored.

The liberty of the child should have as its limit the collective interest; as its form, what we universally consider good breeding. We must therefore, check in the child whatever offends or annoys others, or whatever tends toward rough or ill-bred acts. But all the rest - every manifestation having a useful scope - whatever it be, and under whatever form it expresses itself, must be permitted.³⁹

Decisively she rejected irresponsible permissiveness which castigated

³⁶Ibid., p. 97.

³⁷Ibid., p. 92.

³⁸Ibid., p. 101.

³⁹Ibid., p. 87.

all repression. "To let the pupils do what they like, to amuse them with light occupations, to lead them back to an almost wild state, does not solve the problem....⁴⁰ The principle of liberty is not a principle of abandonment."⁴¹

A visitor to a Montessori class once asked one of the students if she always did what she liked. "'No, ma'am,' said the child. 'It is not that we do as we like, but we like what we do.' The child had grasped the subtle difference between doing a thing because it gives one pleasure, and enjoying a piece of work that one has decided to do."⁴²

In a prepared environment, which we will discuss later, Maria set the boundaries in which the child could freely function. "Useless or dangerous acts" were, of course, "suppressed, destroyed."⁴³

Dr. Montessori knew that at some time the children that she handled would be exposed to the current mode of collective education and that it would happen then as it would other times in life that they must all remain seated and quiet for long periods of time.⁴⁴ She conceived of this, however, as a point at which the children would arrive and not as something that should be imposed from the start.⁴⁵

In The Montessori Method, the definite parallel of freedom and discipline is paramount. Active discipline "contains a great educational principle, very

⁴⁰Maria Montessori, The Formation of Man, op. cit., p. 19.

⁴¹Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, op. cit., p. 9.

⁴²Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 284.

⁴³Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 88.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 93.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 94.

different from the old-time absolute undiscussed coercion to immobility."⁴⁶

One of the things that gave Madame Montessori the greatest food for thought was "precisely the fact of order and discipline so closely united as to result in freedom."⁴⁷ Thus she could say, as she often did, "Freedom and discipline go hand in hand."⁴⁸

Discipline, however, is not a fact, but a way, which the child masters with precision.⁴⁹ over a varying period of time.

Dr. Montessori, in The Montessori Method, vividly illustrated that discipline must be acquired: "I saw children with their feet on the tables, or with their fingers in their noses....I saw others push their companions, and I saw dawn in the faces of these an expression of violence."⁵⁰ The kernel of the method can be isolated thus: "Here is encountered the great difficulty of really disciplining man. It is not by words that it will be done for man is not disciplined by hearing another speak; there is required as preparation a series of...actions."⁵¹ Discipline is reached always by indirect means. The end is obtained, not by attacking the mistake and fighting it, but by developing activity in spontaneous work."⁵²

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 95.

⁴⁷Maria Montessori, The Secret of Childhood, Trans. Barbara B. Carter (Calcutta: Orient Longmans, 1961), p. 147.

⁴⁸Maria Montessori, "As the Twig is Bent," Rotarian. LXXXII (Jan., 1953), p. 11.

⁴⁹Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, op. cit., p. 373.

⁵⁰Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 92.

⁵¹Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, op. cit., pp. 370-371.

⁵²Maria Montessori, "Disciplining Children," op. cit., p. 96.

This is the heart of Montessori's Theory of Discipline. In The Montessori Method she describes it:

The first dawning of real discipline comes through work. At a given moment it happens that a child becomes keenly interested in a piece of work, showing it by the expression in his face, and by his intense attention, by his perseverance in the same exercise. That child has set foot on the road leading to discipline.⁵³

She reiterates this same principle, almost paraphrases it, in The Discovery of the Child: "The first glimmerings of discipline appear as the result of work. At some given moment it happens that the child becomes deeply interested in a piece of work; we see it in the expression of his face, his intense concentration, the devotion to his exercise. That child has entered upon the path of discipline."⁵⁴

In The Absorbent Mind she again notes: "Discipline is born when the child concentrates his attention on some object that attracts him and which provides him with a useful exercise."⁵⁵

The importance here is not so much the external object, "but the internal action of the soul, responding to a stimulus, and arrested by it."⁵⁶ Dr. Montessori said she never really knew the precise moment when the change took place in the child but the growing interest of the child in every kind of occupation⁵⁷ and the ability to repeat the same exercise often were signs that

⁵³ Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 350.

⁵⁴ Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, op. cit., p. 370.

⁵⁵ Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., pp. 263-64.

⁵⁶ Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, op. cit., p. 89.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 96.

this child was "on the way to self development, and the external sign of this condition was his self-discipline."⁵⁸

It was interesting to note, also, that after a child had completed a task done with this complete concentration, the child appeared "rested and intimately strengthened."⁵⁹ The movement of the child, however, had to have an intelligent and useful aim in order for the child to realize this lack of fatigue. "Many men feel the dreadful emptiness of being compelled to move without an object. One of the cruel punishments invented for the chastisement of slaves was to make them dig deep holes in the earth and fill them up again repeatedly, in other words, to make them work without an object."⁶⁰

It is evident, then, that to Maria Montessori, discipline came by an indirect route and that this discipline was from within; "every individual must find out how to control his own efforts through calm and silent activity."⁶¹

Dr. Montessori was always very wary, however, of equating the calm man with the disciplined man. She thought that the calmness of the children was too physical a symptom, "too partial and superficial compared with the true discipline being established within the child." She did not want her schools to be merely models of the much-sought-after external discipline found in the

⁵⁸Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 358.

⁵⁹Maria Montessori, The Child, op. cit., p. 21.

⁶⁰Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, op. cit., p. 149.

⁶¹Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, op. cit., p. 371.

common schools,⁶² "for the child...learns to move rather than to sit still."⁶³

Since the very mainspring of Montessori's theory of discipline is the fact that it is from within, she speaks often and clearly of this inner force:

Discipline is a path in the following of which the child grasps the abstract conception of goodness....⁶⁴ The child tastes the supreme pleasure associated with the inward order which he has evolved through victories leading to the right goal....⁶⁵ From his consciousness of the (inner) development of his personality, the child derives the impulse to persist in these tasks, the industry to perform them, and the intelligent joy he shows in their completion....⁶⁶

Again she speaks of results evidently from the development of energies latent in the depths of the human soul.⁶⁷ In the case of the little child, she stresses, it is a question of aiding the natural evolution of voluntary action.⁶⁸ He will not be able to work till he feels the awakening within him of that tremendous instinctive activity which is destined to construct his character and his mind,⁶⁹ "All human victories, all human progress, stand upon this inner force."⁷⁰

Dr. Montessori filled many pages of her works with effusive description of the children in which this inner force was at work. "The children appeared

⁶²Ibid., p. 381.

⁶³Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 353.

⁶⁵Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, op. cit., p. 374.

⁶⁶Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, op. cit., p. 152.

⁶⁷Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 349.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 351.

⁶⁹Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 270.

to be too much absorbed in their work to indulge in any of the disorderly actions which had marked their conduct in the beginning....⁷¹ The quiet in class was complete when the children were at work and moving. No one had enforced it, and what is more, no one could have obtained it by external means".⁷² She, further, points out:

In a few days that nebulous mass of whirling particles - the disorderly children - began to take definite form. The children seemed to begin to find their own way; in many of the objects they had at first despised as silly playthings, they began to discover a novel interest, and, as a result of this new interest, they began to act as independent individuals.⁷³

Over and over she underscores the fact that while

all this keen interest in work is in evidence it never happens that children get into disputes about objects. If anyone achieves something extraordinary, he will find some other who will admire and be delighted with it; no one is annoyed when another succeeds, but the triumph of one rouses wonder and pleasure in the others, often stimulates eager imitators. They all seem quite happy and satisfied with doing what they can, without the doings of others arousing envy and selfish emulation, without encouraging vanity and pride.⁷⁴

She enthusiastically posits:

Here you may find forty children from three to seven years of age, intent each on his own work; some are doing exercises, some arithmetic, some tracing letters, some drawing; some are busy with the cloths, some are dusting; some are seated at a table, some stretched on mats on the ground. One hears a faint noise of objects being moved lightly about, of children going about on tip-toe.⁷⁵

⁷¹Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, op. cit., p. 93.

⁷²Maria Montessori, The Secret of Childhood, op. cit., p. 146.

⁷³Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, op. cit., p. 90.

⁷⁴Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, op. cit., p. 368.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 367.

Montessori was often accused of fostering an "exaggerated discipline" in the classroom governed by her method. She knew, though, that freedom was so inherent in this order that only if it were lacking could she be accused of being too stringent for "if there is some lack of discipline, the cause is to be found in some lack of freedom."⁷⁶

It was alleged, too, that she created in her books, as Rousseau had done in his, a kind of romantic story.⁷⁷ She could only answer by telling the disbelievers to come and see for themselves that "my description of these phenomena was not some imaginative tale, or something I had dreamt."⁷⁸

Discipline, then, to Dr. Montessori, was an on-going process dependent on personal freedom. It was brought about through the inner force developed in the child by spontaneous interest in and concentration on an external object (work). The child, internally responding to this external stimulus, learned to move about actively and purposefully, rather than wildly or mutely and apathetically.

Obedience

"Discipline would be impossible if not for the instinct of obedience in the child."⁷⁹ Thus she introduces her second thesis. "It is easy, in fact," she says, "to identify obedience as a natural phenomenon of human life; it is a normal human characteristic." However, even though it is normal, it needs to

⁷⁶Maria Montessori, What You Should Know About Your Child, ed. A. Ghana Prakasham (Madras, India: Vasanta Press, 1961), p. 137.

⁷⁷Maria Montessori, The Formation of Man, op. cit., p. 40.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 39.

⁷⁹Maria Montessori, What You Should Know About Child, op. cit., p. 138.

be cultivated through a long period of maturation.⁸⁰ The instinct is there but in some cases there is no obedience because it is an impossibility.⁸¹ Oppression has so worked against the child⁸² that he does not know "how to obey. He must, therefore, be given the opportunities for exercise in obedience so as to enable him to respond to it."⁸³ To obey, it is necessary not only to wish to obey, but also to know how to."⁸⁴

The instinct of obedience in the child must, therefore, be made useful and active. Because of this Dr. Montessori gave studied consideration to the training of the will.

The will, like every other function, is strengthened and developed by methodical exercises. In our method, exercises of the will are incorporated with all intellectual exercises and in the everyday life of the child. Outwardly the child is learning accuracy and grace of movement, is refining his sensations, and is learning to count and write, but, as a more deepseated result, he is becoming master of himself, the forerunner of the man of strong, ready will.⁸⁵

Dr. Montessori defines three steps through which the development of the will proceeds.

The first level is that in which the child can obey, but not always....If the child is not yet master of his actions, if he cannot obey even his own will, so much less can he obey the will of someone else....At the second level, the child can absorb another person's wishes and express them in his own behaviour. This is the most that is

⁸⁰Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 257.

⁸¹Maria Montessori, What You Should Know About Your Child, op. cit.

⁸²Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 264.

⁸³Maria Montessori, What You Should Know About Your Child, op. cit.

⁸⁴Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 364.

⁸⁵Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, op. cit., p. 383.

usually asked of children. The teacher in the common school asks only that she be obeyed.⁸⁶

There is, however, another phase and this is the power to obey. "Among our children the level reached is so high that the teacher is obeyed immediately, whatever her request may be."⁸⁷

A directress of ten years experience gave a very marked example of a group of children who had arrived at this third phase. One day she told the children to "put everything away before you go home tonight". Before she had completed her sentence they started with great care and speed to put everything away as the teacher had told them. It was with surprise that they heard "when you go home tonight".⁸⁸

This is an extreme example but it relays the message that it is not only necessary, but possible to cultivate the will.

Dr. Montessori feared that the ordinary teacher and the ordinary school often instead broke the child's will.

We often hear it said that a child's will should be 'broken' and that the best education for the will of the child is to learn to give it up to the will of adults. Leaving out of the question the injustice which is at the root of every act of tyranny, this idea is irrational because the child cannot give up what he does not possess. We prevent him in this way from forming his own will-power, and we commit the greatest and most blameworthy mistake. He never has time or opportunity to test himself, to estimate his own force and his own limitations because he is always interrupted and subjected to our tyranny, and languishes in injustice because he is always being bitterly reproached for not having what adults are perpetually destroying.⁸⁹

⁸⁶Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 260.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 262.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 261.

⁸⁹Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 366.

It was Dr. Montessori's contention that it is much easier to destroy a will than to cultivate it. It can be broken in a moment, but the development is a long slow process.⁹⁰

In a very gentle, very surprising way, Dr. Montessori came upon the way she most often used for direct cultivation of the will. One day she entered a class carrying a very small child of perhaps one or two years old. She asked the children to stop what they were doing and to become as quiet as the little child. Her own words best describe what happened.

The silence was so striking that I said, 'What a silence!' - and the children seemed also to feel its quality, and remained still, controlling their breath, till I began to hear sounds that I had not noticed before, as the ticking of the clock, water dripping from an outside tap, and the buzzing of flies. This silence was a cause of great joy to the children, and from it developed a feature of our schools. By it could be measured the strength of the will of the children, and with its exercise the will became stronger and the silence period lengthened.⁹¹

It was with this characteristic gentleness that Maria set about helping the child to develop his will. She abhorred the use of oppression. She said,

Only exercise and experience can correct a disability, and it takes long practice to acquire the various kinds of skill that are needed. The undisciplined child enters into discipline by working in the company of others; not by being told that he is naughty. If you tell a pupil that he lacks the ability to do something, he might as well rejoin, 'Then why talk about it? I can see that for myself.'⁹²

In the same vein she said, "If a child carries out the will of the teacher because he is afraid, or because his affection is exploited, he has no will,

⁹⁰Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 254.

⁹¹Maria Montessori, Education for a New World (4th Ed.; Madras, India; Vasanta Press, 1963), p. 83.

⁹²Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 245.

and obedience that is secured by suppression of the will is truly oppression. Such is often the obedience obtained in schools, but the finesse of discipline is to obtain obedience from developed wills.⁹³

Obedience, then, to Dr. Montessori was an instinct which must be cultivated through the gentle training of the will.

Reward and Punishment

"Rewards for accomplishment were banished from the very first Montessori class. Called 'those degrading things' by Dr. Montessori, they would never substitute, in her view, for the only reason a person should excel - his desire to do so. 'Heaven forbid,' she said, 'that poems should ever be born of the (poet's) desire to be crowned in the capital.'"⁹⁴

To Dr. Montessori the "true and only prize which will never belittle or disappoint is the birth of human power and liberty within."⁹⁵ She felt that other rewards might create the illusion of being effective but when

the child becomes truly self-disciplined, these dissolve like something worthless, like an illusion before reality.⁹⁶ The child, in fact, once he feels sure of himself, will no longer seek approval of authority every step. He will go on piling up finished work of which the others know nothing, obeying merely the need to produce and perfect the fruits of his industry.⁹⁷

⁹³Maria Montessori, Education for a New World, op. cit., p. 85.

⁹⁴Charles Mangel, "Montessori: Education Begins at Three," Look, XXIX, (Jan. 26, 1965), p. 62.

⁹⁵Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 101.

⁹⁶Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, op. cit., p. 370.

⁹⁷Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 275.

It was of great concern to Dr. Montessori that a system of prizes could even warp a child by causing him to choose work for the sake of reward, rather than that which is of most interest and of which he is most capable.⁹⁸ She often said that "he who accomplishes a truly human work, he who does something really great and victorious, is never spurred to his task by those trifling attractions called by the name of 'prizes'."⁹⁹ She insisted that "progress comes from new things that are born, and these, not being foreseen, are not rewarded with prizes."¹⁰⁰

Dr. Montessori happily noted that sometimes the children refused a reward. She said she often saw "gilt crosses pinned to the breasts of children without arousing the smallest reaction; here then was the awakening of a delicate sense of dignity."¹⁰¹

In The Secret of Childhood she illustrates this:

One day on coming into the school I saw a child sitting in a little arm-chair in the middle of the room, all by himself, doing nothing; on his chest he wore the pompous decoration that the teacher had prepared as reward of good behaviour. The teacher told me that the child was being punished. But a moment earlier she had rewarded another child, pinning the decoration on him. And this child, passing beside the culprit, had passed the decoration on to him, as though it were something useless and in the way of anyone who wanted to work. The culprit looked at the decoration with indifference and then looked tranquilly about him, evidently without feeling his punishment. This was enough to show the vanity of rewards and punishments.¹⁰²

⁹⁸Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 24.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁰¹Maria Montessori, The Secret of Childhood, op. cit., p. 138.

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 137-138.

The prevalence of the use of punitive measures in the common schools surprised and appalled Dr. Montessori. She reports in The Formation of Man that when her beliefs became known, "a group of English teachers protested publicly and declared that if punishments were abolished they would resign from teaching because they could not educate without punishments." In the same vein she mused: "Punishments! I had not realized that they were an indispensable institution holding sway over the whole of child-humanity. All men have grown up under this humiliation!"¹⁰³

Another source of astonishment to Dr. Montessori was the inquiry sponsored by the Institute Jean-Jacques Rousseau in co-operation with the New Education Fellowship. "Educational institutions and private homes were asked what kind of punishments they used to educate the children. It is curious that instead of feeling offended at such an indiscreet inquiry all hastened to submit information and some institutions seemed proud of their mode of punishing."¹⁰⁴

Dr. Montessori insisted that "the normal man grows perfect through expanding, and punishment as commonly understood is always a form of repression."¹⁰⁵

Although Maria Montessori rejected every form of repression or oppression she was not above correction. E.M. Standing mentions that she told him once of

¹⁰³Maria Montessori, The Formation of Man, op. cit., p. 40.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰⁵Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 25.

an occasion when she reprimanded a disorderly child in a house where she was staying. "The mother said, 'But you shouldn't do that - it is against the Montessori principles!' 'As if I didn't know my own principles,' she added with a wry smile."¹⁰⁶

Correction, however, was the exception and not the rule. She thought that "rather than try to correct the thousand and one visible signs of a deviation from normal development, the teacher needs only to offer, in an interesting form, means for the intelligent development of more harmonious movements."¹⁰⁷

One of the basic contentions of Montessori's system is that "the child who does not do, does not know how to do."¹⁰⁸ The application of this to her condemnation of rewards and punishments can be found in almost any of her writings.

We know only too well the sorry spectacle of the teacher who, in the ordinary schoolroom, must pour certain cut and dried facts into the heads of scholars. In order to succeed in this barren task, she finds it necessary to discipline her pupils into immobility and to force their attention. Prizes and punishments are ever-ready and efficient aids to the master who must force into a given attitude of mind and body those who are condemned to be his listeners.¹⁰⁹ But supposing he (the child) set himself to work; then the addition of prizes and punishments is superfluous; they only offend the freedom of his spirit. Hence, in schools like ours which are dedicated to the defence of spontaneity and which aim at setting the children free, prizes and punishments obviously have no place. Moreover, the child who freely finds his work shows that to him they are completely unimportant.¹¹⁰

It is difficult to find in the writings of Maria Montessori any other

¹⁰⁶E. M. Standing, Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work, op. cit., p. 281.

¹⁰⁷Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 266.

¹⁰⁸Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 47.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹⁰Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 245.

approach than this very positive one of showing the child who does not do, what to do, and rewards and punishments become unnecessary. Although she does say that certain harmful acts should be repressed, in all of her writings she mentions using only one method to do this.

Isolation almost always succeeded in calming the child; from his position he could see the entire assembly of his companions, and the way in which they carried on their work was an object lesson much more effective than any words of the teacher could possibly have been. The isolated child was always made the object of special care, almost as if he were ill.¹¹¹

Isolation from the children, but with the very special attention of the teacher is the only method that she speaks of in her writings.

To Maria Montessori, then, external rewards and punishments were untenable. The satisfaction found in the need to produce and perfect his own work was the child's inherent and only reward, a reward which eliminated the need for punishment.

The Child

Dr. Montessori's writings become sensitive and almost fragile whenever she directly refers to the child as such. She was imbued with a deep worship of life, a reverence and respect which was apparent in the deep human interest with which she observed the development of child life.¹¹²

She was wont to say

The infant is a man - such is the figure we ought to keep in view. We must behold him amidst our tumultuous human society and see how with heroic vigor he aspires to life.¹¹³ He is not yet quick in movement and

¹¹¹Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., pp. 103-103.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, op. cit., p. 371.

in language, and will have to become so; he is passing through an experience full of mistakes and is struggling painfully toward the right goal which his instincts keep hidden, which is not clear to his understanding. The movements, whatever, which have to be established are those corresponding to the behaviour of man.¹¹⁴

She considered the care and culture of this infant life to be an imperative cause,¹¹⁵ and she demanded for this life an almost religious and reverent respect.¹¹⁶ Montessori was a Christian and she accepted as one of the basic tenets of Christianity that "human dignity must be helped, respected, and recognized in its greatness."¹¹⁷

Even though the infant was recognized as man, this did not mean that "the child was only a 'future being'" and that respect was only due him when he had matured into full manhood.¹¹⁸ She required for the children the same respect and courtesy which she asked for herself.¹¹⁹ She wanted, too, for the children, an immense kindness. She wanted the kindness which consisted in, "interpreting the wishes of others, in conforming one's self to them, and sacrificing, if need be, one's own desire."¹²⁰

Among teachers, she frequently saw something less than this kindness.

¹¹⁴Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, op. cit., p. 371.

¹¹⁵Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 106.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷E. Mortimer Standing, "Seeds of Evil in the Child's Soul," The Downside Review, XVIII (Winter, 1960), p. 53.

¹¹⁸Maria Montessori, The Child, op. cit., p. 2.

¹¹⁹Maria Montessori, Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook (Cambridge, Mass.: Robert Bentley, Co., 1964), p. 78.

¹²⁰Ibid.

All the crosses made by the teacher on the child's written work, all her scoldings, only have a lowering effect on his energies and interests. To tell a child he is naughty or stupid just humiliates him; it offends and insults, but does not improve him. For if a child is to stop making mistakes, he must become more skillful, and how can he do this if, being already below standard, he is also discouraged?¹²¹

It was frightening to her that in London she could buy whips in bundles, as they were still used by teachers. "The necessity for these 'indispensable means' of education proves that the life of childhood...and its human dignity is not respected."¹²² What is worse yet, the tendencies which were stigmatized were often merely those which were a source of annoyance to adults.¹²³

He, as does every strong character who defends the rights of life within him, rebels against anyone who opposes this something which he feels within him, which is a voice of nature which he must obey; then he shows in violent actions, in screams and weeping that he has been thwarted in his mission. In the eyes of those who do not understand him and who, whilst thinking they are helping him, are pushing him backward along the ways of life, he appears as a rebel, a revolutionary, a destroyer. Thus the adult who loves him fastens on his bent neck still another slander."¹²⁴

In Spontaneous Activity in Education she describes in a different manner, the same problem.

The child has something within himself which governs his inner life: it is the force of his own expansion. It is the force, for instance, which leads him to touch things in order to become acquainted with them, and we say to him, 'Do not touch'; he moves about to establish his equilibrium, and we tell him to 'keep still'; he questions us to acquire

¹²¹ Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 245.

¹²² Maria Montessori, The Formation of Man, op. cit., p. 41.

¹²³ Maria Montessori, Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook, op. cit., p. 116.

¹²⁴ Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, op. cit., pp. 378-379.

knowledge, and we reply, 'Do not be tiresome'....He might well think: Who does she, whom I love so dearly, want to annihilate me?¹²⁵

Rather than stifle this inner life we must "await the manifestations which we know will succeed one another."¹²⁶

In many of the adults with whom she came into contact, Dr. Montessori saw the results of this annihilation. Exercises she performed with them were astonishing in their results. "The torpid movements of the grownups, the lack of grace, the almost complete incapacity to give expression to the face. This made us realize, indeed, that we have lost something upon the path of life."¹²⁷

Dr. Montessori made an important distinction with reference to the "normalized" child. "Under proper conditions, the will is a force which impels activities beneficial to life. Nature imposes on the child the task of growing up, and his will leads him to make progress and to develop his powers."¹²⁸

In The Formation of Man she gives an even clearer description of this.

Now children as they are ordinarily known - unstable, lazy, disorderly, violent, disobedient, etc. - are 'functionally' ill and can be cured by a hygienic form of psychic life. In other words, they can be 'normalized'. Then they become like disciplined children who gave these revelations at the beginning of our work, and who surprised us so much. In consequence of this normalization the children do not become 'obedient' to a teacher who gives them lessons and corrects them; but they find their guide in the laws of Nature i.e., they start again to function normally.... What is usually called 'The Montessori Method' is entirely based upon this essential point.¹²⁹

¹²⁵Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, op. cit., p. 192.

¹²⁶Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 105.

¹²⁷Sheila Radice, op. cit., p. 108.

¹²⁸Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 253.

¹²⁹Maria Montessori, The Formation of Man, op. cit., p. 46.

Dr. Montessori thus insists that it is possible for all children to express goodness in their movements. When this does not happen the child should be given special care and attention until he begins to function normally. She described a normally functioning child as one who

does not need anyone to be constantly near him telling him repeatedly to keep still, to be good - commands embodying two contradictory ideas. The goodness which he has acquired can no longer make him keep still in idleness; his goodness is wholly expressed in movement....The child has not only learnt to move about and to carry out useful operations, but he possesses a special grace of movement which makes his gestures more correct and beautiful and shows itself in beauty of the hand, the face, and the calm shining eyes - the whole a revelation of the inward life which has been born in a man.¹³⁰

It was almost boastfully that she referred to this as a reality. "It is the children themselves who spread my method. Happily they behave as I say they do in books, and people go and see them, and at last believe in themselves."¹³¹

A major question which Dr. Montessori had to answer in relation to the child was - is man good or evil? Her answer was arbitrary: "The ancient philosophical discussion as to whether man is born good or evil is often brought forward in connection with my method, and many who have supported it have done so on the ground that it provides a demonstration of man's natural goodness. Very many others, on the contrary, have opposed it, considering that to leave children free is a dangerous mistake, since they have in them

¹³⁰Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, op. cit., pp. 373-374.

¹³¹Maria Montessori, The Child in the Church (London: Sands & Co., 1930), p. 184.

innate tendencies to evil."¹³²

She was accused, too, of agreeing with Rousseau that "in man all is good, but everything is spoilt in contact with society. She offended the various philosophies concerning the nature of the human soul"¹³³ and she caused scandal by saying that in her experiences "the revelations of the child eliminated punishments."¹³⁴

She usually answered these charges by saying that she did not think that the goodness of children in their freedom would solve the problem of the absolute goodness or wickedness of man. "We can only say that we have made a contribution to the cause of goodness by removing obstacles which were the cause of violence and rebellion."¹³⁵

Dr. Montessori clarified the point using the following example:

If, for instance, we were to see men fighting over a piece of bread, we might say: 'How bad men are!' If, on the other hand, we entered a well-warmed eating-house, and saw them quietly finding a place and choosing their meal without any envy of one another, we might say: 'How good men are!....We can, for instance, provide excellent eating-houses for an entire people without directly affecting the question of their morals. One might say, indeed, that to judge by appearances, a well-fed people are better, quieter, and commit less crime than a nation that is ill-nourished; but whoever draws from that the conclusion that to make men good it is enough to feed them will be making an obvious mistake.

It cannot be denied, however, that nourishment will be an essential factor in obtaining goodness, in the sense that it will eliminate all the evil acts and the bitterness caused by lack of bread.¹³⁶

¹³²Maria Montessori, Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook, op. cit., p. 115.

¹³³Maria Montessori, The Formation of Man, op. cit., p. 40.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 42.

¹³⁵Maria Montessori, Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook, op. cit., p. 121.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 118.

Dr. Montessori never really felt compelled to address herself to the question to any greater extent. She did not argue the point because she thought that it was rather a question of "individuals who are more or less fortunate, and not necessarily of individuals who are more or less good."¹³⁷

To Dr. Montessori, then, the child is a man deserving of the deepest respect and having within himself a power which governs his inner life and which forces his own expansion. Imposed on the child is the task of growing up, and his will leads him to make progress in developing his powers.

The Teacher

The role that Dr. Montessori outlines for the teacher in her system differs from that of the teacher in the common school.

In the traditional schools, the teacher sees the immediate behaviour of her pupils, knowing that she must look after them and what she has to teach. The Montessori teacher is constantly looking for a child who is not yet there. This is the main point of difference. The teacher, when she begins work in our schools, must have a kind of faith, that the child will reveal himself through work.¹³⁸ She must become passive, much more than an active influence, and her passivity shall be composed of anxious scientific curiosity, and of absolute respect for the phenomenon which she wishes to observe. The teacher must understand and feel her position of observer: the activity must be in the phenomenon.

Always the teacher had to remember she must not serve any particular political or social creed, but be dedicated to the service of the complete human being,¹³⁹

¹³⁷E. Mortimer Standing, "Seeds of Evil in the Child's Soul," op. cit., p. 53.

¹³⁸Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 277.

¹³⁹Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential, op. cit., p. 3.

not too assertive but with a complete and deep sense of responsibility.¹⁴⁰

It was Dr. Montessori's belief that "the work of the educator consists primarily in protecting the powers and directing them without disturbing them in their expansion; and in the bringing of man into contact with the spirit which is within him and which should operate through him."¹⁴¹

Logically, the only book the teachers were to use was the child himself. "The observation of the way in which the children pass from the first disordered movements to those which are spontaneous and ordered - this is the book of the teacher...which must inspire her actions; it is the only one which she must read and study if she is to become a real educator."¹⁴²

So intent was Dr. Montessori on the teacher learning to observe that she wrote very specific instructions as to how to do it. Her guide to the observations of obedience and conduct could be summarized as follows:

1. Note if the child responds regularly to summons, eagerly and joyously.
2. Note if change in behavior from disorderliness to orderliness take place during the development of the phenomena of work.
3. Note whether the child experiences serenity in the use of ordered actions.

¹⁴⁰Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 262.

¹⁴¹Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, op. cit., p. 194.

¹⁴²Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 94.

4. Note the interest the child takes in the development of his companions.¹⁴³

The work of the teacher, then, was to "bring the full possibilities of the children,"¹⁴⁴ not to impart what was hers.

Dr. Montessori thought, also, that the greatest benefit the teacher could bestow on the child was her own exercise of restraint¹⁴⁵ for the "great principle which brings success to the teacher is this: as soon as concentration has begun, act as if the child does not exist."¹⁴⁶ The child then becomes his own teacher¹⁴⁷ and the more active he becomes, the less active the teacher need be and "in fact, she may end by standing almost completely aside."¹⁴⁸

Needless help is an actual hindrance to the child.¹⁴⁹ "Who does not know that to teach a child to feed himself, to wash and dress himself, is a much more tedious and difficult work, calling for infinitely greater patience, than feeding, washing and dressing the child one's self? But the former is the

¹⁴³Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, op. cit., pp. 123-124.

¹⁴⁴F. C. Orem, A Montessori Handbook (New York; C. P. Putnam & Sons, 1965), p. 44.

¹⁴⁵Maria Montessori, "Environment for the Child," Saturday Review, CLII (December 19, 1931), pp. 783-784.

¹⁴⁶Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 281.

¹⁴⁷Maria Montessori, The Formation of Man, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁴⁸Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 244.

¹⁴⁹Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 99.

work of an educator, the latter is the easy and inferior work of a servant."¹⁵⁰

Constant interruption is also a hindrance to the child. "He who interrupts the children in their occupations in order to make them learn some pre-determined thing; he who makes them cease the study of arithmetic to pass on to that of geography and the like, thinking it is important to direct their culture, confuses the means with the end and destroys the man for a vanity. That which it is necessary to direct is not the culture of man, but the man himself."¹⁵¹

This is very difficult for a teacher, especially one trained in the common school, to "assimilate and practice."¹⁵²

The teacher, then, is to be an observer rather than one who treats the children as "storehouses into which new objects are continually deposited."¹⁵³ Neither is she to ignore the child who is eager to answer because he knows the material, questioning especially the pupils who are uncertain, making those who do not know speak, and those who do know be silent.¹⁵⁴

She substitutes for criticism and sermonizing, "a rational organization of work and liberty for the child."¹⁵⁵ When her class becomes undisciplined

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁵¹Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, op. cit., p. 180.

¹⁵²Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 88.

¹⁵³Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, op. cit., p. 209.

¹⁵⁴Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 351.

¹⁵⁵Maria Montessori, "Disciplining Children," op. cit., p. 102.

and disorderly, she "sees in the disorder merely an indication of some error that she has made: she seeks this out and corrects it."¹⁵⁶

Dr. Montessori is patient with the new teacher, especially the one who has been trained to teach in the common school, for "when she begins to find it her duty to discern which are the acts to hinder and which are those to observe, the teacher of the old school feels a great void within herself and begins to ask if she will not be inferior to her new task. In fact, she who is not prepared finds herself for a long time abashed and impotent."¹⁵⁷ Further she warns that "filled with enthusiasm and faith in the inner discipline which she expects to appear...she will find herself faced by no light problem...."¹⁶⁰

The appearance of discipline which may be obtained is actually very fragile, and the teacher, who is constantly warding off a disorder which she feels to be 'in the air,' is kept in a state of tension. The great majority of teachers, in the absence of sufficient training and experience, end by thinking that the 'new child' so eagerly expected and of whom so much has been said, is nothing but a myth or an ideal. They may also conclude that a class held together by such an effort of nervous energy, is both tiring for the teacher and not profitable for the children.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 287.

¹⁵⁷Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 89.

¹⁵⁸Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child, op. cit., p. 370.

¹⁵⁹Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁶⁰Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 263.

¹⁶¹Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, op. cit., p. 87.

This is a very probable happening if the teacher does not realize the importance of the orientation period, and if she does not realize "that liberty begins when the life that must be developed in the child is initiated."¹⁶²

This brings another very basic concept of the Method into focus. That is the Prepared Environment. When asked if she could compress a description of her principles into one phase, Maria answered that it would be, "Liberty in a Prepared Environment."¹⁶³

Discipline becomes possible only in the proper environment, an environment which favors life, rather than stifles it.¹⁶⁴ Again she says:

Order is not goodness, but perhaps it is an indispensable way to attain it.¹⁶⁵ If the child lacks suitable external means he will never be able to 'make use of' the great energies with which nature has endowed him. He will feel the instinctive impulse toward an activity such as may engage all his energy, because this is the way nature has given him of making perfect the acquisitions of his faculties. But if there is nothing there to satisfy this impulse, what can the child do but what he does - develop his activity without any aim in disorderly boisterousness?¹⁶⁶ It is the preexistent 'known' which excites expectation and opens the door to the novel 'unknown'; and it is the already present 'easy work' which opens new ways for penetration, and puts the attention into a state of expectation."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶²Ibid.

¹⁶³Maria Montessori, The Child in the Church, op. cit., p. 110.

¹⁶⁴Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 106.

¹⁶⁵Maria Montessori, The Formation of Man, op. cit., p. 44.

¹⁶⁶Maria Montessori, The Child, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁶⁷Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, op. cit., p. 158.

So important is the Prepared Environment that Dr. Montessori says that education is not what the teacher gives but rather a "natural process spontaneously carried out by the human individual, and is acquired not by listening to words but by experiences upon the environment."¹⁶⁸

It is the Prepared Environment, very carefully described in Maria Montessori's writings, that her theory of inner discipline becomes a possibility and a reality. The environment, to be sure, is a necessity because the "school must give the child's spirit space and opportunity for expansion"¹⁶⁹ while providing "him not only with a useful exercise but with a control of error."¹⁷⁰ It needs not only to care for the hypothetical average student but, also, for the pupils on each end of the ability curve.¹⁷¹

It is in such an atmosphere that control of the child decreases as he grows older¹⁷² and in which he "cultivates a friendly feeling towards error, treating it as a companion inseparable from his life, something having purpose, which it truly has."¹⁷³

Dr. Montessori very simply describes such a room in this manner: "A

¹⁶⁸Maria Montessori, Education for a New World, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁶⁹Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 264.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., p. 263.

¹⁷¹Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential, op. cit., p. 19.

¹⁷²Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁷³Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, op. cit., p. 246.

room in which all the children move about usefully, intelligently, and voluntarily, without committing any rough or rude act, would seem to me a classroom very well disciplined indeed."¹⁷⁴

To Dr. Montessori, then, the teacher is an observer of children for whom she must have a deep respect and love. She does not impart what is hers but rather brings out that which is within the child. Restraint is her constant companion, so much so that when the child has begun to concentrate she does not interrupt him and, in fact, acts as if he does not even exist. It is her duty to prepare the environment in which such concentration can be begun and carried on.

Conclusion

To define the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline it is necessary to examine Maria Montessori's idea concerning discipline through liberty, obedience, reward and punishment, the child, and the teacher.

From this examination we can conclude that the principles of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline are:

1. The child is a man deserving of the deepest respect.
2. The child has within himself a power which governs his inner life and which forces his own expansion.
3. Nature imposes on the child the task of growing up, and his will leads him to make progress in developing his powers.
4. The teacher is an observer of children for whom she must have a deep respect and love.

¹⁷⁴Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, op. cit., p. 93.

5. The teacher does not impart what is here but rather develops that which is within the child.

6. The teacher must exercise restraint, so much so that when the child has begun to concentrate she does not interrupt him, and, in fact, treats him as if he does not exist.

7. Obedience is an instinct which must be cultivated through the gentle training of the will.

8. The teacher must prepare the environment in which concentration can be begun and carried out and in which the will can be gently trained.

9. Discipline is an on-going process dependent on personal freedom.

10. Discipline is brought about through an inner force developed in the child by spontaneous interest in and concentration on an external object (work).

11. The child, internally responding to an external stimulus (work), learns to move about actively and purposefully, rather than wildly or mutely and apathetically.

12. The satisfaction found in the need to produce and perfect his own work is the child's inherent and only reward, a reward which eliminates the need for punishment.

It is to the discussion of these principles by writers other than Maria Montessori that we proceed.

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE MONTESSORI THEORY OF INNER DISCIPLINE AS DESCRIBED BY OTHER WRITERS

Introduction

"Nobody who visits a Montessori classroom ever looks at education quite the same way again."¹ This is on one hand a left-handed compliment, while on the other hand it focuses on the essence of the Montessori Method--its inescapably dynamic effect on the children and on those who came to scoff and stayed to praise.

Controversial as the Method became, the woman herself frequently clouded judgments and confused her critics. Although many believed her to be "no mere fashion, and no mere infant-school influence," acknowledging that "we can all go on learning from her for a long time yet,"² others saw her as possessing a personal charism rather than a particular method.

There seems to be little doubt that when she herself taught, in her hands, the most simple exercise could become the experience of a lifetime. But this was a personal charism. The problem is whether or not the system provides for such an experience, in any structured plan, to be used by a less talented directress.³

¹Bruce Miller, "Montessori: The Model for Preschool Education?," The Grade Teacher, LXXXII, (March, 1965), p. 117.

²Francis Drinkwater, Telling the Good News (London: Macmillan & Co., 1960), p. 223.

³Aubert J. Clark, "Montessori and Catholic Principles," The Catholic Educational Review, LX (February, 1962), p. 80.

A further source of confusion is the marked dichotomy between what Madame Montessori wrote and what she did, between her philosophy and her pedagogy, her theory and her practice. She seems to have obtained her theory from her studies; her practice she derived from a shrewd observation of human beings. Consequently, her teaching procedures may either contradict her general principles or have no discernible relationship with them. Always, however, her reaction to the children, her grasp of their needs, her handling of them, her methods of teaching--these are constant and right. "As a clinician and teacher she is magnificent, but like many other great teachers she is an indifferent philosopher. As a result, Dr. Montessori sometimes seems to do the right things for the wrong reason."⁴ Her own adopted son admits that his mother was "one of the few great educators to owe her principles more to her practice than to the other way round!"⁵

It is the application of her principles concerning discipline, as derived from her practice, that many writers have examined while she was alive and since her death. It is with these that the present chapter concerns itself.

Discipline Through Liberty

Rightly, Dr. Montessori has received abundant and enthusiastic endorsement for her doctrine of discipline through liberty. Even her most

⁴Cole, op. cit., p. 572.

⁵Mario M. Montessori and Claude A. Claremont, "Montessori and the Deeper Freedom," Year Book of Education, (1957), p. 414.

respected and well-known critic, William Heard Kilpatrick, had to admit that her greatest service was in the "practical utilization of liberty."⁶ As early as 1913 Culverwell said that "of all the applications of the principle of freedom, the most far-reaching and the most original is the general liberty of the schoolroom."⁷

In this same year, 1913, a manual for parents was published which heralded liberty of action as a prerequisite for the child's growth. This is the

rock on which the edifice of her system is being raised. It is also the rock on which the barks of many investigations are wrecked. When they realize that she really puts her theory into execution, they cry out aghast, 'What! A school without a rule for silence, for immobility, a school without fixed seats, without stationary desks, where children may sit on the floor if they like, or walk about as they please; a school where children may play all day if they choose, may select their own occupations, where the teacher is always silent and in the background--why, that is no school at all--it is anarchy!'"⁸

So convinced was Mrs. Fisher of the need for liberty for children that she told her readers that unnecessary restrictions placed upon their children were a crime.⁹

⁶William Heard Kilpatrick, The Montessori System Examined (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1914), p. 67.

⁷E. P. Culverwell, The Montessori Principles and Practice (New York: John Martin's House, 1913), p. 175.

⁸Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Montessori for Parents (Cambridge, Mass.: R. Bentley, 1913), p. 124.

⁹Ibid., p. 140.

At this same time, Ellen Stevens, who had the privilege of studying under Maria Montessori, wrote A Guide to the Montessori Method. She observed that even though the liberty that Madame Montessori spoke of was "liberty through law," it was not a partial liberty or a restrained liberty.¹⁰

So difficult a concept was this to grasp that Florence Ward wrote, in an attempt to apply the Montessori Method to the American School, that in the association of the word "freedom" and "the child", the most fundamental problem of American education was being touched,¹¹ and justly so. She advocated almost adamantly that American schools follow the lead of Dr. Montessori and take the ideal of freedom out of the realm of theory and put it into general practice.¹²

It was this practical application which seemed to call forth criticism in the early days of the application of the Method. "The child must have perfect freedom up to the point of collective interest,"¹³ but this point is only very vaguely described as "when the child is doing some of those things which we must not do."¹⁴

Possibly because of this very vagueness there seems to be a lack of interest indicated in this theory by the dearth of writings after 1914. It was

¹⁰Ellen Stevens, op. cit., p. 199.

¹¹Ward, op. cit., p. 28.

¹²Ibid., p. 50.

¹³Mrs. Marshall Darrach, "Pupils Who Never Hear Don't," Overland Monthly, LXIII (June, 1914), p. 590.

¹⁴L.M. Dent, "Are the Montessori Claims Justified?," Forum, LI (June, 1914), p. 884.

only in 1949 that Dr. Montessori's son, Mario, began again to proclaim the "gospel of liberty".

Freedom is more vital to the child than to any grown-up; if the loving care of a dominating nation is irksome to a people, lack of freedom must appear deadly to a child who has to develop in body and spirit. The child is a rebel only because the adult is an unconscious, though well-meaning, tyrant. If freedom is a necessity of grown-up life, it is absolutely vital to the growing spirit. Nature has instilled the child with an unquenchable love for this freedom but there is no one as much a slave as the child. That is the tragic reality....A being that needs movement and sensorial experience to grow mentally, who, at that epoch, needs freedom more than at any other time of his life, is imprisoned in a room where other children are packed with him. There he must be silent still, attentive to a teacher who tells what he is to do, what he is to think, when he is to talk and even when he is to relieve his bodily needs. The exercise of its intelligence is limited almost entirely to effects of memory. Back at home, there is more work to do under the watchful care of an adult that fears lest his child should lose the year. It studies until it is time to go to bed. Then sleep...and another day. Day after day, year after year, until he is no longer a child, such is his life; urged, scolded, punished, cajoled, pricked in his vanity--a prisoner, always a prisoner, condemned to forced labor for life!¹⁵

With the establishment of the Montessori School in Whitby, Connecticut, the possibility of the application of the theory of discipline through liberty gained new support. Nancy Rambusch, headmistress, showed very concretely that the Montessori Method provides "the twin keys to human development--self-mastery and mastery of environment through the exercise of liberty."¹⁶

If one were to discuss the present American system of education at the level of its two polarities--the most permissive kind of public

¹⁵Mario M. Montessori, "Freedom and its Meaning," American Teacher, XXXIII (March, 1949), pp. 15-16.

¹⁶Joe Alex Morris, "Can Our Children Learn Faster," The Saturday Evening Post, CCXXXIV (September 23, 1961), p. 18.

education on the one hand, and the most rigid kind of private education on the other--it could be said that in neither of these extremes is self-discipline truly found. A child who is exposed to anarchy is not a free child, nor is a child who is exposed to rigidity.¹⁷

Dr. Urban Fleege, in agreement with Nancy Rambusch, stated that "Montessori's emphasis on freedom and discipline as side by side prerequisites in any effective learning environment, will lead public school administrators to discover that presence of freedom but the absence of discipline in many a classroom, while the opposite is likely to be the discovery of many a parochial school administrator."¹⁸

This seems to be very neatly summed up in a statement made by Standing. "If there were no liberty, there would be no self-discipline. On the other hand, if there were no self-discipline there could be no true liberty."¹⁹

By the late 1960's Maria Montessori seems to have come into her own. "The traditional schools began displaying efforts at fostering self-development, creativity, a freedom to explore."²⁰

A.M. Joosten described it best when he said, "It is often said that the Montessori Method gives freedom to the child. Some think too much, others not enough. The question gains in clarity if we realize that the Montessori Method aims at setting free the riches hidden within the child. It offers them the

¹⁷Nancy Rambusch, Learning How to Learn (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1962), p. 48.

¹⁸Fleege, Building the Foundations for Creative Learning, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁹E. Mortimer Standing, The Montessori Method - A Revolution in Education (Fresno: Academy Library Guild, 1962), p. 93.

²⁰R.C. Orem, Montessori for the Disadvantaged (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1967), p. 94.

conditions which help them come forth, which call them forth and further their growth and increase in breadth and depth."²¹

Maria Montessori equated liberty with activity, spontaneity, individuality and independence. Zealous confirmation has been accorded this as noted in writings beginning in the early twentieth century.

Burrows, in 1912, hailed Montessori as an "almost saviour" as she saved the education of the child from being lost in the education of the children. She saved the individual from being swamped in the mass.²²

Ellen Stevens, in *A Guide to the Montessori Method*, lent further support to the equation of liberty with individuality. She praised Montessori's appraisal of each child as a "living, biological manifestation to be separately guided and studied."²³ She used the Kipling illustration of the strength of the wolf being in the pack, but the strength of the pack in each separate wolf. "If we are to have each child benefit by group work, we must first secure his response as an individual, and must be sure that he is in such a state of development that he is able to respond to the social appeal."²⁴

In *Montessori for Parents*, Dorothy Fisher explained to the parents of the early 20th century that the Montessori Method was in accord with the American way of life. "Our own democracy," she said, "was based, a hundred or

²¹A.M. Joosten, "Wasted Riches," National Catholic Kindergarten Review, XVII, (March, 1968), p. 11.

²²H. Burrows, "Spontaneous Education: The Montessori Method," Contemporary Review, CII (September, 1912), p. 330.

²³Stevens, op. cit., p. 195.

²⁴Ibid., p. 40.

so years ago, on the idea that men reach their highest development only when they have, for the growth of their individuality, the utmost possible freedom which can be granted them without interfering with the rights and freedom of others."²⁵

Florence Ward added to this; she tried to apply the method to American schools by telling American parents that "our universal error is to shape the child, somewhat unconsciously, but nevertheless definitely, according to our own prejudices. Such coercion is fatal to the advance of the race in a differentiated and ever ascending civilization."²⁶

While the United States was building interest the advancement of the technique continued in Europe.

Of special interest is a description of a successful Montessori School in Berlin in the year 1931. It is most unusual because, at this time, German schools were especially known for severe regimentation. "Here far from regimentation, even those intricate steps by which a child acquired the fundamental tools of learning are left largely to the workings of youthful curiosity."²⁷

Nancy Rambusch, the American apostle of Montessori, became very critical of contemporary American schools in the early sixties. She said that

conventional education has long equated immobility with virtue. In many American schools, teachers are silently warning themselves to watch that one--he's moving!²⁸....There is no good reason for a child

²⁵Fisher, Montessori for Parents, op. cit., p. 118.

²⁶Ward, op. cit., p. 31.

²⁷Elizabeth Reichenbach, "Teacherless Plan," New York Times, March 15, 1931, Section III, p. 7, col. 4.

²⁸Rambusch, Learning How to Learn, op. cit., p. 22.

to be silent if by speaking he can communicate something that to him is worthwhile. He is a better judge at this stage than the teacher would be.²⁹

Nancy Rambusch, because she was a practitioner and not just a theorist, knew and understood the limits of the liberty of which Montessori wrote.

By liberty we mean the freedom to choose between things which are in themselves good so that the child is never endangered by either a choice that is detrimental to him or by a choice that he is actually incapable of assessing....³⁰ Obviously, in giving the child a choice in terms of self-discipline, the adult must know whether the child is capable of choice. The child shows himself capable through the adult's observation of him. Gradually the child is given a choice between two things. Very gradually the choice is expanded, always to those things a child can do, always to those things which are good in themselves, always to those things which are related to the good of the entire group. There are controls built into the whole notion of choice that make the self-discipline a very safe mechanism for the development of the child.³¹

E.M. Standing underlined Nancy Rambusch's thesis when he posited that "thus we see that Montessori liberty does not mean, as so many persons still falsely imagine, giving the child freedom to do anything he likes. This would be to abandon the child, not to give him freedom."³²

In this same vein, Violet Curtis who also actually applied the Montessori principles to a classroom setting, wrote that she employed the Montessori principle of freedom in all the lessons and activities. "This

²⁹Ibid., p. 47.

³⁰Ibid., p. 25.

³¹Ibid., p. 49.

³²Standing, The Montessori Method - A Revolution in Education, op. cit., p. 91.

freedom permitted spontaneous manifestations that enable one to guide the child in his natural tendencies. Restrictions were necessary, of course, in case of a rude or dangerous act or a child's interfering with the rights of others. Sometimes it was expedient to supplement freedom with a suggestion."³³

In 1966 a psychologist examined the Montessori Theories and was especially impressed with the respect for the child as an individual. "The evidence has been so impressive that we hesitate to accept, without qualification, any view of child development that does not include recognition of this degree of individuality."³⁴

In summary, then, the Montessori concept of liberty as opposed to the traditional school concept is best described by R.C. Orem.

The traditional school format allows the child little freedom of movement, speech or choice in the manner and method of his education. It imposes upon his individuality an arbitrary time-table of events and topics, all at the teacher's discretion. And even on those occasions when the child does become interested in the task at hand, he has no assurance that he will be permitted to complete the work before the teacher's schedule interrupts his concentration. Again and again, throughout their school experience, children have their rhythm of work broken with the words 'Now children, let's...' In time the child learns to protect himself from this shock of interruption; he learns not to concentrate. Many children find in the Montessori classroom the first environment in which the random events of adult life do not automatically take precedence over his own investigations of the world.³⁵

It seems fair to conclude that writers who examined Maria Montessori's concept of liberty agree with her that it is of grave importance to the development of the child. They seem also to concur that it has fair limits and

³³Violet Hummel Curtis, Our Kindergarten; Experiences in Applying Montessori Principles (New York: Exposition Press, 1964), p. 41.

³⁴Gardner, op. cit., p. 81.

³⁵Orem, op. cit., p. 44.

that it is synonymous with activity, spontaneity, individuality and independence.

The relationship of this liberty to discipline created much interest among those who examined and those who applied the Montessori Method. That this was not a new problem in education was confirmed by Barrows who wrote in 1912 that "every social student of today is continually confronted by a very perplexing problem, the difficulty of reconciling the needed control of the individual by the community with the development of the individual as a separate and self-controlled entity."³⁶

Dorothy Fisher admits, in Montessori for Parents, that it took a great deal of time for her to be led to the "conviction that children really have not that irresistible tendency toward naughtiness which my Puritan blood led me unconsciously to assume."³⁷ It was because of this conviction that she had used the much handier force of compulsion which practically "any adult with a club (physical or moral) could compass, if the child in his power was small enough."³⁸ Elatedly, Mrs. Fisher proclaimed to the parents of America that she had been wrong. Schooling did not have to be abhorrent to the child and he did not have to be forced to it. With the liberty to choose that which he was able to do and with the capacity for close, consecutive attention to it, the child could develop a very valuable form of self-discipline.³⁹

³⁶Barrows, op. cit., p. 329.

³⁷Fisher, Montessori for Parents, op. cit., p. 163.

³⁸Ibid., p. 142.

³⁹Ibid., p. 143.

Carolyn Bailey wrote, in relation to this, in cloyingly sweet terms of the freeing of Otello the Terrible, a child who learned self-discipline.⁴⁰ Most writers, however, took a more pragmatic attitude in substantiating the theory.

Dr. Montessori's use of the word discipline seemed to have more to do with training than with control. This was substantiated in Theodate Smith's statement that "every time a child completes a series of coordinated actions directed towards a given end, every time he repeats his exercises, correcting his own errors, every time he accomplishes something which he has undertaken, he is training his positive will-power."⁴¹ Culverwell adds to this by saying, "In this connection nothing is more important than to let the child exhaust his impulse."⁴² Hamilton corroborates when he summarizes, "DO is the keynote of her method and her plan."⁴³

In the flurry of writings between 1912-1914, Ellen Stevens complains that not enough time and serious thought were given to what Dr. Montessori actually meant. "The concept of discipline as ordered activity founded on liberty is so opposed to the conventional one that it takes time and thought to understand it right and apply it properly; but it contains a great educational

⁴⁰C.S. Bailey, "Freeing of Otello the Terrible," Delineator, LXXXIII (October, 1913), p. 14.

⁴¹T.L. Smith, The Montessori System in Theory and Practice (New York: Harper Brothers, 1912), p. 42.

⁴²Culverwell, op. cit., p. 180.

⁴³A.E. Hamilton, "Montessori Obedience," Journal of Education, LXXIX (June 25, 1914), p. 734.

principle."⁴⁴

This complaint seemed justified when, in 1914, the observation was made; "On no point does the Montessori system seem to be more widely (I had almost written 'wildly') misunderstood than on that of discipline."⁴⁵

There were those, however, who very conscientiously studied and applied the method. Mary Blackburn, who experimented in a large infant's school, reported that "people who have come to visit my school have marvelled at the self-control of the children, and the free, happy, natural way in which they move about and conduct themselves when at their work. A great educator said to me one day, 'You have solved the problem of discipline.'"⁴⁶

Actual research done in the area of Montessori Theories is yet very new and inconclusive. However, a very short experimental examination of the application of the theory of discipline to pre-schoolers done in 1956 led to the conclusion that "the results of Montessori's method of discipline, though not perfect, are sufficiently impressive to make one question whether the theory of self-discipline is not the one valuable contribution that Montessori may have made to education."⁴⁷

⁴⁴Stevens, op. cit., p. 25.

⁴⁵Katherine W. Huston, "Montessori Discipline," Journal of Education, LXXIX (February 19, 1914), p. 206.

⁴⁶Mary Blackburn, Montessori Experiments in a Large Infant's School (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1921), p. 20.

⁴⁷Louise Ellison, "A Study of Maria Montessori's Theory of Discipline through an Examination of Her Principles and Practice and an Experiment with Pre-school Children" (unpublished Masters Thesis, Tufts University, Medford, Mass., 1956), conclusion.

Supporters of the Whitby School would say that it is not the only important aspect of the Montessori Method, but they would agree that it is an extremely important one which they have met and conquered. "Whitby's main problem is adapting Montessori self-discipline to U.S. children. 'These are American kids,' says Headmistress Rambusch. 'They check their guns at the door and we can't escape the fact that they need activity.' From the intent look of her kids, who confine their whoops and hollers entirely to the playground, she seems to have the problem in hand."⁴⁸ In fact the situation is so well in hand that the writer goes on to describe it in this manner: "Whitby is proudly 'a work school, not a play school,' and in their uniform grey skirts and shorts the children at first seem unduly solemn. Silence fills the classroom; tears and giggles are rare; even teachers speak in near whispers. The visitor is sure that something is drastically wrong. Actually, the children are absorbed in a series of graded 'jobs' that each feels compelled to complete - on his own."⁴⁹

Francis Drinkwater goes so far as to say of this type of setting that "if there is any kind of education responsible for producing our delinquents it is certainly not the Montessorian. The freedom she accorded was based firmly on self-control."⁵⁰

Nancy Rambusch contends that this self-control is "not an outgrowth of

⁴⁸"Joy of Learning, Whitby School," op. cit., p. 63.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Drinkwater, op. cit., p. 224.

learning, but a very condition of it. What is to be learned, the subject matter itself, produces the discipline. To the degree to which the student becomes the active agent of his own learning, he becomes absorbed in it and informed by the discipline such involvement produces....⁵¹ The discipline, therefore, from the very beginning resides in the children."⁵²

E.M. Standing adds to this that "such self-discipline does not come into existence in a day, or a week, or even a month. It is through the result of a long inner growth, an achievement won through months of training."⁵³

Parental interest and support is of absolute necessity if those months of training are to bear fruit. Dr. Ronald Koegler observes that it happens that

the teacher is attempting to establish self-control in the child, while some parents are only giving lip-service to this aspect of Montessori, and have need of a continuous display of aggression from the child. This means that a considerable proportion of American middle-class children are unable to profit fully from Montessori education because the neurotic family relationship is manifested so quickly in behavior. The parents demand that their sons behave in an aggressive manner.

Although one does not explicitly find it in the writings of Maria Montessori, Samuel Brown reports that

regulations for parents were clearly written; when these rules were respected the parents and their children were thought to be 'deserving of the benefits' of the school. Expulsion took place if the children presented themselves unwashed or in soiled clothing or were deemed

⁵¹Rambusch, Learning How to Learn, op. cit., p. 120.

⁵²Ibid., p. 49.

⁵³Standing, Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work, op. cit., p. 199.

incorrigible. The parents were deemed incorrigible. The parents were admonished to cooperate with the teacher and not undo the good works of the school through their own bad conduct.⁵⁴

Given parental support and parental understanding of the theory of discipline, the children can, however, acquire it. Visitors to the new schools in which the Montessori philosophy holds sway wax eloquent in describing it.

More than anything else, a Montessori school resembles the quiet, serious atmosphere you might expect to find at a modern research lab. There is the same dedicated concentration, the intense personal involvement in an intellectual pursuit...the same relentless repetition of an experiment until it is finally fully understood and mastered once and for all. Only in the size of the technicians does the facsimile between Montessori and a research lab end....⁵⁵ They can walk about or sit on a couch in the hall; eat a cookie while they read or type. Having learned to discipline themselves, according to the Montessori theory, they can progress without the artificial rigidity of the 'normal' classroom.⁵⁶

As stated before, not much research has been attempted to verify the Montessori claims. Dr Urban Fleege, of DePaul University, Chicago, has made a beginning under a grant from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Among his conclusions can be found a statement that Montessori children show among other qualities greater gains in self-control.⁵⁷

It seems fair to conclude that the writers who examined and applied the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline agree with the definition of discipline derived from her writings: Discipline is an on-going process

⁵⁴Lucile Perryman et al., op. cit., p. 12. ⁵⁵Millar, op. cit., p. 113.

⁵⁶Shirley DeLeon, "Montessori for Adolescents," Children's House, I (Jan., Feb., 1967), p. 8.

⁵⁷Urban Fleege, Michael Black, and John Rackauskas, Montessori Pre-school Education (Chicago: DePaul University, 1967), p. 52.

dependent on personal freedom. It is brought about through an inner force developed in the child by spontaneous interest in and concentration on an external object (work). The child, internally responding to this external stimulus, learns to move about actively and purposefully, rather than wildly or mutely and apathetically.

To this could be added that the acquiring of the self-control inherent in this type of discipline is very dependent on parental understanding and support.

Obedience

"One of the most valuable effects of the training received in the Montessori system of education comes from the regular progressive development of the will."⁵⁸ This development of the will is dependent on two factors, the desire to do something, and the ability to perform it.⁵⁹

The ability to perform is the hallmark of the ability to obey. Ellen Stevens, in A Guide to the Montessori Method, gives a very telling example of this.

As the teacher dictated the lesson in which the arrangement of the sticks was to simulate a window, each of the fifty children were expected to obey orders. Soon on the twenty-five desks at which fifty children sat, the sticks were seen in all sorts of positions, from those designed by the bright boy or girl who could understand and obey the order to that of the poor little creature who painfully and blindly imitated his comrade, or sat in despair with his useless slips of wood in front of him. On the faces of these children, I saw depicted, in the place of joyful emotions, a whole gamut of feeling;

⁵⁸ Stevens, op. cit., p. 39.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 36.

pride, joy, despair, envy, anxiety, fatigue. Here...was nerve strain, because they were attempting a task too hard for them and were using up their nerve force in trying to understand and follow the arbitrary commands of a teacher, instead of gladly responding with a sense of ability to...work for which they had previously been prepared.⁶⁰

Dorothy Canfield Fisher clarifies this when she says that "a child is no more born into the world with a full-fledged capacity to obey orders, than to do a sum in arithmetic....However, anyone who will under ordinary circumstances try the simple experiment of asking a little child to perform some operation which he has thoroughly mastered will be convinced that obedience in itself involves no pain to a child."⁶¹

A child cannot, then, obey the whim of a parent or a teacher.⁶² The orders given a child "must be chosen from the class of things which can be made to be."⁶³

Culverwell, however, makes it very clear that "Dr. Montessori does not hesitate to suppress and destroy with absolute rigor the free impulses of the children towards doing anything that she thinks they might not do; the rigor only relates to the result; her methods of suppressing them are clearly based on loving sympathy and on reverence for the child."⁶⁴

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 43-44.

⁶¹Fisher, Montessori for Parents, op. cit., p. 157.

⁶²Dorothy Fisher, The Montessori Manual for Teachers and Parents (Cambridge, Mass.: Robert Bentley, Inc., 1964), p. 110.

⁶³Culverwell, op. cit., p. 169.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 204.

In this regard he mentions one of the major criticisms levelled at Montessori. "It is in regard to this question of repression that the inexperienced Montessori teacher appears to find the greatest of her difficulties."⁶⁵ Dr. Montessori gives us no suggestion as to how these undesirable actions are to be repressed."⁶⁶ Whatever the method she used, it was accompanied by gentleness⁶⁷ for it was her aim to make obedience "a spontaneous and happy thing."⁶⁸

For forced immobility Mme. Montessori would substitute the quietness that comes from concentration upon a fascinating problem, for pressure from the teacher she would substitute the pressure of the children upon each other; for forced learning she proposed spontaneous interest. The pupils would thus learn to control themselves because they would find out that only by so doing could they accomplish the things their interest was urging them to accomplish.⁶⁹

Nancy Rambusch handles the problem of repression in this manner:

Consequently the most effective mechanism for handling recalcitrant children in a Montessori classroom is isolation; that is, not isolation from the group as such, but isolation from independence. The child who is incapable of working independently works near the teacher and must move with her when she moves in order that she keeps her eye on him. When he feels he is again capable of working independently, he is free to return and set about his business independently. This need for independence comes from him.⁷⁰

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 158.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 168.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 169.

⁶⁸Hamilton, op. cit., p. 735.

⁶⁹Cole, op. cit., p. 569.

⁷⁰Rambusch, Learning How to Learn, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

Most of the writers agree with Montessori's very positive attitude toward obedience and subscribe to the principle derived from her writings: Obedience is an instinct which must be cultivated through the gentle training of the will.

Reward and Punishment

"The will power is more apt to be perverted into grotesque and unprofitable shapes by the use of punishment than to be encouraged into upright, useful and vigorous growth."⁷¹

Ellen Stevens adds that "if the two-fold nature of true liberty, expression and inhibition, is kept in mind and the balance between them preserved, the necessity for punishment, so-called, will be avoided."⁷²

Florence Ward agrees with Dr. Montessori that rewards can even be harmful to children. She tells the story of a father and mother who were called out on an emergency leaving two small sisters to take care of themselves. Upon arriving home they found the children sleeping, the younger one very carefully covered by the older one. The father rewarded the older child for her solicitude. On the next evening, the older child forced the younger one to lie down when she was neither sleepy nor cold, to be covered up. The father's reward had caused the older child's motive to drop to a lower level.⁷³

"Have you not seen the look of surprise on the face of a child when

⁷¹Fisher, Montessori for Parents, op. cit., p. 154.

⁷²Stevens, op. cit., p. 46.

⁷³Ward, op. cit., p. 45.

praised for a thing he had done with great pleasure and without conscious effort? Perhaps you have seen this same child come to overestimate his effort because of unnatural stimulus and settle back to indifference."⁷⁴

Ellen Stevens reminds those who apply the Montessori principles that there is, however, a very careful distinction which must be made between praise and reward.

But we clearly understand the distinction she makes between that sympathetic relationship established between the child and his parents or teacher, by means of caresses and words of praise and encouragement for what is well done, and the formal bestowal of medals, stars or other prizes. The first only stimulates his feeling of joy in accomplishment, the second puts another motive first, so that the child is trained not to find pleasure in the work or doing of it, but in an outside reward.⁷⁵

The child should develop so that "he will find sufficient motive-force within himself in the expansion of his own power, and that anything extraneous, like a reward or a prize is an insult to the expanding life-force within him."⁷⁶

Many a teacher has found this to be the stumbling block of the method, "There is apparently little to 'get hold of'; no solid immovable framework of prizes, punishments, and rules."⁷⁷

Montessori's son warns these teachers that "the need to compel is always a proof of pedagogical error."⁷⁸ Learning should be satisfactory enough

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 44.

⁷⁵Stevens, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Radice, op. cit., p. 105.

⁷⁸Montessori and Claremont, op. cit., p. 420.

to be its own reward.⁷⁹ B.F. Skinner verifies this when he says, "A school system must be called a failure if it cannot induce students to learn except by threatening them for not learning."⁸⁰

R.C.Orem synthesizes well when he says, "Montessori principles imply that the motivational system of traditional education with its emphasis upon grades and other external rewards and punishments is psychologically unsound and should be replaced by the intrinsic rewards of competence, self-confidence and love of learning."⁸¹

It seems fair to conclude that the writers who examined the Montessori philosophy agree with her rejection of reward and punishment. They seem to agree with the principle derived from her writings that the satisfaction found in the need to produce and perfect his own work is the child's inherent and only reward, a reward which eliminates the need for punishment.

The Child

Among the most ardent supporters of Maria Montessori's concept of the child was Sigmund Freud. In a letter to her he said, "Since I have been preoccupied for years with the study of the child's psyche, I am in deep sympathy with your humanitarian and understanding endeavors, and my daughter

⁷⁹M.C. Flynn, "Headmistress: Nancy Rambusch," Today, XVII (Nov., 1961), p. 4.

⁸⁰Rambusch, Learning How to Learn, op. cit., p. 123.

⁸¹Orem, Montessori for the Disadvantaged, op. cit., p. 179.

who is an analytical pedagogue, considers herself one of your disciples."⁸²

Freud further noted; "If all the world's children were subjected to Montessori educational techniques, most of our psychoanalytical couches would be empty."⁸³

Madame Montessori's life-long task was to find understanding for the child. In a letter written within twenty-four hours of her death she made a plea to educators to manifest this understanding.⁸⁴

Many writers and educators of the twentieth century responded to her call for this understanding and respect. Mary Blackburn felt that any other course of action was "to do violence to life itself."⁸⁵

O. Burke maintained that the "basic idea of the Montessori philosophy of education is that every child carries unseen within him the man he will become."⁸⁶ The child is, therefore, not a defective adult, but an emerging man or woman.⁸⁷

Nancy Rambusch stressed this same point as she complained about the monitorial teaching techniques of the 19th century. "These," she said, "betray little understanding of the needs of the child, who was an emergent

⁸²Ronald Gross, The Teacher and the Taught (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1963), p. 46.

⁸³Millar, op. cit., p. 116.

⁸⁴"Plea to Educators to Understand Children," Catholic Educational Review, L (Sept., 1952), p. 491.

⁸⁵Blackburn, op. cit., p. 143.

⁸⁶O. Burke, "Whitby School," Jubilee, VI (Feb., 1959), p. 23.

⁸⁷Morris, op. cit., p. 24.

man muscularly and intellectually, and not a defective adult."⁸⁸

Mrs. Rambusch continues to describe the child by saying:

He loves to work, and loves the order that work involves. He works well alone, but will suffer companionship. He seems completely absorbed in his tasks and yet will be willing to share information and experience with others. He will enjoy being obedient, yet will not lack initiative. This hypothetical child does exist in Montessori classes.⁸⁹

"This realization of the true nature of the normalized child is Montessori's great discovery and forms, at the same time, her chief claim on the gratitude of the human race."⁹⁰

Schill goes so far as to say that "Montessori's greatest contribution is her insistence upon the necessity for observing and caring for each individual child."⁹¹ She realized, with Emerson, that the secret of education lies in respecting the pupil.⁹²

It is to the human creature who builds his own unique person and personality that, indeed - and that means in deed - the greatest respect is due. The child should be respected, not only as a creature created by the Creator and entrusted to our Charity but also as a creature who 'will create (or better, through whose active cooperation there will be created by his Creator) a unique person, he himself, the adult he will be.'⁹³

⁸⁸Nancy Rambusch, "Montessori Approach to Learning," National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin, LVIII (August, 1961), p. 320.

⁸⁹Rambusch, Learning How to Learn, op. cit., p. 60.

⁹⁰Standing, The Montessori Method - A Revolution in Education, op. cit., p. 90.

⁹¹B. Schill, "Montessori System," Childhood Education, XXXIX (Dec., 1962), p. 171.

⁹²Orem, A Montessori Handbook, op. cit., p. 85.

⁹³A.M. Joosten, "The Dignity of the Child," op. cit., p. 26.

It was important for the child, too, to realize his own dignity. "Underlying the careful programming and detailed exercise of Maria Montessori was the aim of helping the child achieve confidence in himself and his abilities. That a healthy self-concept is a necessary prelude to accomplishment both in school and in adult life is now recognized by psychologists and educators of all persuasions."⁹⁴

Dr. Fleege confirms this, explaining that "children are led to become acquainted with themselves, to learn what they can do, to take pride in their own achievement."⁹⁵ Orem adds: "The child who can see in the results of his work the gaining of another bit of mastery over his environment has thereby gained in self-confidence and self-mastery. The labor of the young worker is an extension of himself."⁹⁶

It seems fair to conclude that those who applied and wrote about the Montessori Method concurred with her opinion of the child being a man deserving of the deepest respect. This child has within him a power which governs his inner life and which forces his own expansion, and imposes on him is the task of growing up. His will leads him to make progress in developing his powers.

⁹⁴Lena Gitter, "A Child's Quest for a Self-Concept," National Catholic Kindergarten Review, XVII (March, 1968), p. 14.

⁹⁵Urban H. Fleege, "The Promise of Montessori," Extension, LX (June, 1965), p. 9.

⁹⁶Orem, Montessori for the Disadvantaged, op. cit., p. 161.

The Teacher

There must be less of doing for the child where he can do for himself; less of the short period program where interest is too highly excited only to be too soon dissipated; less of minute direction by mother...or teacher; in short, more of an opportunity for a child to lead a simple, healthy, normal life....In the practical working of this idea she has set an example to home, to kindergarten and to primary school.⁹⁷ The tyranny and artificiality of over-much direction by the teacher must go.⁹⁸

In these words, William Heard Kilpatrick, one of Dr. Montessori's most outspoken critics, praised her concept of the role of the teacher.

When Montessori first introduced her method, Ellen Stevens promoted, among other things, the Montessori concept of the teacher. Mrs. Stevens decried the fact that many teachers chose the simpler path of being a nurse rather than an educator. "If the teachers yield to their own desire to serve rather than train they only hamper the child and hold him back on the road to liberty through independence and keep him from the joy of self-mastery."⁹⁹

Culverwell further delineated Montessori's idea of authority and the teacher. He said that many a teacher fell into the pitfall of saying, "Children are to be free to follow such spontaneous impulses as I think desirable; those which I think undesirable are to be suppressed, destroyed."¹⁰⁰

This is actually a gross misuse of authority and Montessori, who was so inspired by Seguin, subscribed to his definition of authority. "Authority is like obedience, a mere function, whose existence is provoked by corresponding incapacities; it ceases when its object is accomplished, and is no more

⁹⁷Kilpatrick, op. cit., p. 26.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 19.

⁹⁹Stevens, op. cit., p. 31.

¹⁰⁰Culverwell, op. cit., p. 191.

inherent in the individual who happens to exercise it than his coat is adherent to his cellular tissue."¹⁰¹

Sheila Radice adds an interesting aspect to the Montessori chronicle when she notes that Dr. Montessori said that the concept of the role of the Montessori teacher is probably more intelligible to a woman than to a man. "We await the successive births in the soul of the child. We give all possible material, that nothing may lack to the groping soul, and then we watch for the perfect faculty to come, safeguarding the child from interruption so that it may carry its efforts through."¹⁰²

The personality of the teacher is of the greatest importance.¹⁰³ She must "have absolute faith in every child, and then leave him free to act without apparent supervision, in order to see him in his natural state."¹⁰⁴

That Dr. Montessori gave specific directions to the teacher is true, but that she gave them the freedom to apply them in the manner possible is supported by Luella Cole, who says, "In short, when Madame Montessori was confronted by actual children she did what was sensible, practical, and possible - and did it superlatively well."¹⁰⁵

Montessori's son, Mario, says, however, that even though his mother gave the teacher a great deal of area, the teacher must be adequately trained.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 164.

¹⁰²Radice, op. cit., p. 106.

¹⁰³Blackburn, op. cit., p. 27.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰⁵Cole, op. cit., p. 568.

¹⁰⁶Montessori and Claremont, op. cit., p. 426.

It is not a matter, as Nancy Rambusch says, of personally seducing the child through the teacher's own love of learning. "Part of her teaching task...is to free them of her, to give them the opportunity of learning for the enjoyment of learning itself, and not to please the teacher. This personal satisfaction of learning must be constantly rediscovered by the child for himself if his achievement is not to become simply a means of obtaining social approval."¹⁰⁷

Mrs. Rambusch decries, too, the "traditional fallacy in the education of young children that is best exemplified by the teacher who dominates the class totally. The same teacher, when she leaves the classroom, in nine cases out of ten will have all hell break loose behind her back, because she carries within herself not only all the motives for discipline, but all the discipline itself."¹⁰⁸ She prefers, espousing the Montessori concept, to rather think of the teacher as one who "protects the child's right to work."¹⁰⁹

The obvious benefit of this disciplined yet "active" classroom is in "the ability of the Montessori teacher to give help where it is most needed..."¹¹⁰ for in many cases it is not the child who is not 'ready' to learn, but rather the teacher who is not 'ready' to teach him."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷Nancy Rambusch, "Montessori Reappraised," Jubilee, VII (April, 1960), p. 45.

¹⁰⁸Rambusch, Learning How to Learn, op. cit., p. 47.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 92.

¹¹⁰Rambusch, "Montessori Reappraised," op. cit., p. 44.

¹¹¹Rambusch, Learning How to Learn, op. cit., p. 3.

The teacher never becomes so inactive that she does not teach. "There are some children who can only be creative if they are sure of a technique. Therefore, the teaching of skills, when children reach out for them spontaneously, may lead to creativity and not away from it."¹¹² Only useless aids arrest a child's development, not necessary aids.¹¹³

Father Clark says that the Montessori teacher "stands by" very much in the nautical sense of the phrase.¹¹⁴ So vital is this "standing by" aspect that Nancy Rambusch says that once we understand it and then bring our modern technology to play in creating learning devices, we will have touched Montessori's greatest contribution.¹¹⁵

Celia Stendtler likewise says that it is not really the discipline itself that is the secret of her success, but rather the fact that a "child spent most of the day on his own, selecting from a wide variety of stimulating equipment, and having individual instruction in use of that equipment as the teacher had time to give it."¹¹⁶

The discipline, however, is inherent for "order is possible because of the firmness of the rules dealing with the use of the didactic materials."¹¹⁷

¹¹²Plank, op. cit., p. 41.

¹¹³Standing, The Montessori Method - A Revolution in Education, op. cit., p. 12.

¹¹⁴Clark, "Evaluation of Montessori Postulated in the Light of Empirical Research," op. cit., p. 13.

¹¹⁵John Henry Martin, "Montessori after 50 Years," Education Digest, XXXI (September, 1965), p. 9.

¹¹⁶Celia Stendtler, "Montessori Method: Review," Educational Forum, XXIX (May, 1965), p. 432.

¹¹⁷Marshall D. Schechter, "Montessori and the Child's Natural Development," Children's House. I (Sept.-Oct., 1966), p. 16.

In 1966, Kate March stated that of the two major differences between Montessori and other systems today, one of them is the training of the teacher.¹¹⁸ "The Montessori teacher needs a greater sensitivity to children than the average teacher; that is, in their needs, to their motivational patterns, to individual differences."¹¹⁹ The Montessori teacher needs to completely recognize the fact that no human being is educated by anyone else. He must do it himself or it is never done."¹²⁰ R.C. Orem contends that "Montessori herself noted her first teachers would undoubtedly have been unsuccessful had they been conditioned by traditional teacher training."¹²¹

It is the duty of the teacher to establish the proper environment, a vital factor in the learning process. Ellen Stevens says that "environment can favor or stifle life",¹²² while Nancy Rambusch even more clearly defines the importance of the environment:

An environment for small children which already possesses a certain order, where each object is in its proper place and can always be found there, helps the child orient himself. An environment with 'built in' discipline in which a glass, if dropped, will break, a chair if jarred, will topple over, teaches the small child a great deal about physical self-mastery. It is not the verbal emphasis that abounds in the Montessori method, but the sensory. When the teacher speaks, it is to say something that the environment cannot say. A

¹¹⁸Kate March, "A Look at Four Classrooms," Children's House, I (Nov., Dec., 1966), p. 15.

¹¹⁹Virginia Fleege, op. cit., p. 119.

¹²⁰Aline Wolf, "Why I Like Montessori," National Catholic Kindergarten Review, XVII, (Oct., 1967), p. 13.

¹²¹Orem, Montessori for the Disadvantaged, op. cit., p. 89.

¹²²Stevens, op. cit., p. 24.

growing awareness of order in the universe is closely linked to the idea of the child's adaptation.¹²³

The ordered environment cannot be overstressed because "the world of the child is full of sights and sounds which at first appear chaotic. From this chaos he must gradually create order, and learn to distinguish among the impressions that assail his senses."¹²⁴

The Montessori concept of liberty is only possible within the prepared environment.

It will be seen more clearly now how indispensable a factor is the presence of the prepared environment, with all its purposeful activities, in making it possible for us to grant liberty to the children. It would certainly not be granting true liberty, in the Montessori sense, if one were to say to children in an ordinary classroom (unfurnished with the immense variety of occupations which are found in a Montessori schoolroom): 'Now, children, you are free to choose your own work.'¹²⁵

For the child, Nancy Rambusch says, there should be certain things that he can rely on unalterably from the moment he comes to class.¹²⁶

There is little difference between the

apparent need the young child has for order and the more arbitrary need of the adult. The adult generally likes things orderly and tidy because he equates order with comfort, or because he cannot function as effectively in disorder. Montessori believes that order is indispensable for the fullest development of the young child precisely because he learns from the environment what the environment provides.¹²⁷

¹²³Nancy Rambusch, "Freedom, Order and the Child," Jubilee, V, (April, 1958), p. 37.

¹²⁴Barke, op. cit., p. 23.

¹²⁵Standing, The Montessori Method - A Revolution in Education, op. cit., p. 92.

¹²⁶Rambusch, Learning How to Learn, op. cit., p. 26.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 33.

Dorothy Fisher adds that "like any other good habit, obedience cannot come from one or two violent efforts. It must come from a long, long continuance in the right conditions. And to secure these 'right conditions' the Montessori apparatus, method, and philosophy are the most potent means as yet discovered."¹²⁸

Dr. Ronald Koegler so concurs with the Montessori concept of the prepared environment that he thinks it

can be of aid to American child-rearing practices by showing how a consistent prepared environment can bring relaxation to most children and their parents. It is possible to successfully communicate the logical limit-setting of Montessori to most American parents. A 2½ year old is not permitted to use materials he is not ready for and cannot be successful with; teachers do not feel guilty in not permitting him to work with the golden bead material if he cannot deal with the red rods. Parents should not feel guilty in restricting their child from watching a violent television program whose emotional impact cannot be coped with successfully.¹²⁹

Excessive rigidity within the prepared environment, however, can stifle. The unbending, stereotyped, inflexible type of person who tends to feel at home

only in situations that are stabilized, where a given routine is established and forever thereafter adhered to, would not find happiness in working in a Montessori class. Such a person would find it difficult to capitalize on the creative aspects within the structured Montessori environment. The Montessori teacher needs to appreciate order, while at the same time, prizing freedom. A Montessori teacher must not seek to establish either a rigid environment or a rigid routine; nor should she seek to bolster her own security by striving for such regularized rigidity, or rigid regularity.¹³⁰

¹²⁸Fisher, The Montessori Manual for Teachers and Pupils, op.cit., p.122.

¹²⁹Urban Fleege, op. cit., p. 44.

¹³⁰Virginia Fleege, op. cit., p. 63.

A delicate compromise must be reached in this regard. "Within the framework of a clear-cut system of organization, the child is allowed complete freedom of choice of activities."¹³¹ A healthy balance between certainty and uncertainty is provided so that the actual happenings confirm the child's expectations of future events."¹³²

Lena Gitter seems to have aptly summarized the relationship between the environment the teacher prepares and the development of inner discipline:

The prepared environment meets the child's needs. It is self-correcting and leads to successful experiences. The rewards are intrinsic and power is his in mastery of the work apparatus. Affection is his in the form of the complete attention that the teacher is able to give him because of the individual nature of the teaching method. By thus meeting the child's physical and emotional needs, the need for other directed behavior is minimized.¹³³

In conclusion, most critics concur with the Montessori conception of the teacher as an observer of children for whom she must have a deep respect and love. She does not impart what is hers but rather develops that which is within the child. Restraint is her constant companion, so much so that when the child has begun to concentrate she does not interrupt him, and, in fact, acts as if he does not even exist. It is her duty to prepare the environment in which such concentration can be begun and carried on, and in which the will can be thus gently trained.

¹³¹Schechter, op. cit., p. 16.

¹³²Orem, Montessori for the Disadvantaged, op. cit., p. 166.

¹³³Gitter, op. cit., p. 19.

Conclusion

In defining the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, it was necessary to examine Maria Montessori's ideas concerning discipline through liberty, obedience, reward and punishment, the child, and the teacher. In examining the principles gleaned in the light of other authors the same procedure was used.

Although Maria Montessori and her method received a fair amount of criticism during her life and since her death, it can easily be observed, from this chapter, that many who examined and applied her method, supported it unreservedly.

It seems reasonable to conclude that these writers support the principles of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline as developed in Chapter I:

The child is a man deserving of the deepest respect having within himself a power which governs his inner life and which forces his own expansion. Nature imposes on this child the task of growing up, and his will leads him to make progress in developing his powers.

The teacher acts as an observer of children and does not impart what is hers but rather develops that which is within the child. She exercises such restraint that when the child has begun to concentrate she does not interrupt him, and, in fact, treats him as if he does not exist. The environment is carefully prepared by her so that such concentration can be begun and carried on.

The discipline that prevails is brought about through an inner force developed in the child through spontaneous interest and concentration. It is dependent on personal freedom and the gentle training of the will and permits

the child to move about actively and purposefully.

CHAPTER IV

AN EVALUATION OF THE MONTESSORI THEORY OF INNER DISCIPLINE IN THE LIGHT OF CURRENT USAGES

Introduction

"American teachers are more confused and disturbed about matters of discipline today than at any previous time in the history of our public school system."¹ Not only is it the most disturbing problem but also the least talked about. "In some educational circles discipline has become a naughty word. Like the skeleton in the family closet, it is rarely mentioned. Guidance, yes. Discipline, no."²

William J. Gnagey states it delightfully when he says, "The fabled incantations of witches practicing black magic could scarcely have evoked a more dread fascination than the subject of discipline. One has to utter the word softly in educational circles, and the cauldron of opinions, argument, and despair begin bubbling ominously."³

That the problem of discipline ranks as number one in nearly all

¹David Ausubel, "A New Look at Classroom Discipline," Phi Delta Kappan, XLII (October, 1961), p. 25.

²H. G. Spalding, "Yes, Discipline!" Scholastic, LXIII (September 23, 1953), p. 15.

³William Gnagey, Controlling Classroom Misbehavior (Washington, D.C.: N.E.A., 1955), p. 3.

surveys of teachers' difficulties "is not a chimera of the critics of modern education; it is a hard fact,"⁴ and research supports it as such.⁵

L.E. Vredevoe reports as a conclusion of a study he conducted that "discipline is a chief concern of ninety-five per cent of all the schools visited and among ninety-eight per cent of the teachers interviewed. Schools and teachers with good patterns of discipline in their classes were concerned about changing conditions which might change these patterns. Others were trying to establish good patterns."⁶

In an analysis of the difficulties reported during the first year of teaching by ninety-five beginning secondary school teachers from the Appalachian State Teachers College in North Carolina, of the three most frequent types of problems, control and discipline ranked first in frequency and importance.⁷

A teacher Opinion Poll conducted in the early sixties asked a national sample of public school teachers who had taught five or more years the following question and received these answers:

⁴Norma Cutts and Nicholas Mosely, "Four Schools of Discipline, A Synthesis," School and Society, LXXXVII (February 28, 1959), p. 87.

⁵Isobel L. Pfeiffer, "Not Discipline Again," Clearing House, XXXI (March 1957), p. 403.

⁶L.E. Vredevoe, "School Discipline: Third Report on a Study of Students and School Discipline in the United States and Other Countries," National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin, XLIX (March, 1965), p. 217.

⁷Fritz Redl and W. Wattenberg, Mental Hygiene in Teaching (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1959), p. 487.

Basing your answer on your personal experience, do you believe that maintaining pupil discipline has become more difficult than when you first started teaching?

More difficult.....45%
 Less difficult.....20%
 About the same.....32%
 Undecided..... 1%

Years of Experience	5-9	10-19	20 or more
More difficult	25%	44%	62%
Less difficult	31%	21%	12%
About the same	43%	35%	25%
Undecided	1%	0%	1%

One thing can be said with certainty: A substantial proportion of experienced teachers feel that their problems of maintaining discipline have increased since they began teaching.⁸

A study done in the public schools of Los Angeles reflected a very disquieting situation for teachers. It concluded that "every class has three problem children and every other class includes a seriously disturbed child."⁹

"Buellesfield, in a study entitled Causes of Failure among Teachers found that 'weakness in discipline' ranked first among twenty-seven causes of failures. One supervisor of teachers who participated in this study wrote: 'I have kept touch of the failure of teachers for years, and in my experience three-fourths of them are due to lack of discipline.'¹⁰

Amos and Orem concur with this, saying that "based upon analysis of their

⁸"Teacher Opinion Poll," NEA Journal, LIII (Sept., 1964), p. 25.

⁹Donald Robinson, "Discipline vs. Freedom," Clearing House, XXIV (Oct., 1959), p. 91.

¹⁰William E. Amos and Reginald C. Orem, Managing Student Behavior, (St. Louis, Missouri: W.H. Green, Inc., 1967), p. 11.

interviewing experience with teachers and ex-teachers at all grade levels, the authors are convinced that failure to gain and maintain effective control in the classroom accounts for more teachers leaving public school classrooms than all other investigated causes put together."¹¹

These same authors also contend that "there is probably no one connected with a teacher education program who has not reached the conclusion that the topmost concern of the prospective teacher is classroom order and control."¹²

For administrators, as for teachers, it is a very serious problem. "Most public school administrators will, in moments of candor, admit that the matter of control in the classroom is the most serious problem with which they have to cope although they, too, like teachers, hesitate to formally acknowledge the problem."¹³ Administrators are, too, accused of sometimes compounding the problem.

The principal tended to smile upon those faculty members who managed to solve their own problems in their own way and to frown upon those who persisted in sending 'bad boys' to the office for him to deal with. Even the dullest teacher soon became aware that the discipline section of his annual rating form would receive a superior evaluation only if he resisted the temptation to ask for help in solving behavior problems. Too often teachers simply threw up their hands and relaxed their classroom discipline standards to the point where almost anything went. In that way, you see, there was no need to send anybody to the office. If one just broadens the definition of discipline and acceptable conduct to the point where almost any type of behavior can be classified as acceptable, then he can say with a clear conscience that he has no discipline problems.¹⁴

¹¹Ibid., p. 10.

¹²Ibid., p. VII.

¹³Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁴Max L. Rafferty, What They Are Doing to Your Children (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 105.

Amos and Orem further maintain that "continued inability to achieve an acceptable level of classroom discipline may cost the teacher his job, for lack of 'classroom control' is the reason probably most cited for teacher failure in our schools."¹⁵

In this connection, Ruediger and Strayer, who authored The Qualities of Merit in Teachers, found that the general teaching merit of two hundred four teachers as estimated by their principals or supervisors correlated higher with ratings of 'ability to keep order' than with any other factor mentioned.¹⁶

Administrators are probably not all wrong in this attitude for "poor discipline is the most important thief of teacher time and efficiency that is known."¹⁷ The complaint seems to be that they appraise it highly but are not sufficiently helpful in establishing and sustaining it. James Herndon narrates an account of this:

The subject of discipline was mentioned, and everyone grew alert...The administrator was going to make statements about discipline. No doubt they had spent some time preparing what they were going to say; what we heard was that the administration wished to concentrate on the individual, on his freedom of action, learning, growth and development, and, at the same time, to promote an orderly and responsible group of children....From this perfect and impossible statement, I gathered, you were supposed to figure out the real attitude of the administration toward the behavior of students in your classrooms, with an eye to your own evaluation. That is, what degree of control you were being ordered to maintain or what degree of disturbance and chaos would be acceptable.¹⁸

¹⁵William A. Amos and R.C. Orem, "Discipline: Some Definitions, Dimensions and Directions," National Catholic Kindergarten Review, XVII, (Oct., 1967), p. 4.

¹⁶Amos and Orem, Managing Student Behavior, op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁷Rafferty, op. cit., p. 113.

¹⁸James Herndon, The Way it Spozed to Be (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), p. 16.

From the vantage point of the child, too, it is a problem. "A particular third-grader was transferred from a school of the ultra-progressive type to one that was definitely authoritarian. In the first he would be told: 'Johnny work these four problems when you feel like it.' In the second he had to keep silence even during lunch period."¹⁹

That discipline is a problem, and one of not such recent origin, is confirmed by Aristotle's complaint that it is very difficult to provide for youth "a right training for virtue."²⁰

St. Thomas More once wrote:

"I find the doctors and the sages
Have differ'd in all climes and ages,
And two and fifty scarce agree
On what is pure morality."²¹

We could very well paraphrase this, using the word discipline. "The meaning of discipline creates as much confusion as does democracy. Discipline may variously be equated with conformity or obedience to a behavioral code, external control, or self-control."²² It has been further confused with punishment. "To do this," says Dr. Hymes, "is like mixing up health and aspirin."²³

¹⁹P.A. Sibbing, "Evaluating School Discipline in 1952," National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin, XLVIII (Feb., 1952), p. 8.

²⁰S.S. Shermis and Karen Kenney, "Discipline; Platitudes and Possibilities," Education, LXXXVI (December, 1965), p. 216.

²¹Vincent A. McClelland, "Discipline in Schools," Month, XXXVII (March, 1967), p. 166.

²²Shermis and Kenney, op. cit., p. 218.

²³James I. Hymes, "Discipline and Punishment are Not One and the Same," Grade Teacher, LXXVI (April, 1959), p. 52.

Amos and Orem define discipline as having reference "to the process of achieving mastery of one's self and environment,"²⁴ while Dewey thought that discipline was "a persistent, self-directed pursuit of an intelligently chosen course of action."²⁵

The Encyclopedia of Educational Research states that it refers "fundamentally to the principle that each organism learns in some degree to control itself so as to conform to the forces around it with which it has experience."²⁶

The Dictionary of Education describes it as:

1. The process or result of directing or subordinating immediate wishes, impulses, desires or interests for the sake of an ideal or for the purpose of gaining more effective, dependable action.
2. Persistent, active, and self-directed pursuit of some selected course of action, even in the face of obstacles or distractions.
3. Direct authoritative control of pupil behavior through punishments and/or rewards.
4. Negatively, any restraint of impulses, frequently through distasteful or painful means.²⁷

All of these have a varying degree of relationship. For the purpose of this paper, however, we shall adopt the one of everyday usage for college students and beginning and, perhaps, even experienced teachers. To them, it simply means "control of the process of their classrooms."²⁸ In the

²⁴Amos and Orem, Managing Student Behavior, op. cit., p. 17.

²⁵Shermis and Kenney, op. cit., p. 218.

²⁶Chester W. Harris (ed.), Encyclopedia of Educational Research (New York: Macmillan, 1960), p. 382.

²⁷E.J. Brown and A.T. Phelps, Managing the Classroom (New York: Ronald Press, 1969), p. 108.

²⁸Lawrence Stenhouse, Discipline in Schools, (Long Island, New York: Pergamon, 1967), p. VII.

discussion of current usages, it will be used with this connotation.

Current Problems and Usages

"A recent New York Assembly codes committee hearing discussing the use of force in New York City and State Schools, witnessed the...arguments of a high-school student who simply 'got fed up' with the booing and hissing and general lack of discipline with which the principal and teachers and other students were constantly greeted."²⁹

The voice of another student was heard in the Newsom Report: "There were so many rules that no one could ever remember them, but no actual discipline as such. No two teachers were alike. They left us in a perpetual state of unbalance."³⁰

Many studies of teachers' activities have shown that much of a teacher's time is given over to just plain managing a classroom. 'Get out your pencils,' 'sit down and shut up,' 'buy the school annual,' 'listen to the principal who is about to speak,' 'do this, do that, do the other thing,' became the contrapuntal theme to the melody line of the instructional system. This can reach ridiculous heights; in one 40 minute class the door opened 32 times, with students coming in and out looking for books, and messengers coming in and out from the office looking for people.³¹

In 1954 the Lansing, Michigan State Journal reported a request from the Teachers' Federation of Grand Rapids to its Board of Education "for a disciplinary code to deal with defiance of authority, fighting, drinking, and the

²⁹Frank Esposito, "Spare the Rod?" Clearing House, XXXIV, (October, 1959), p. 95.

³⁰Stenhouse, op. cit., p. 24.

³¹John E. Searles, A System for Instruction (Scranton, Penn.: International Textbook Co., 1967), pp. 91-92.

carrying of obscene literature or pictures."³²

Continuing in the extremely problematic vein, Whitman describes a district in which "there was vandalism against school property, private property and pupils' personal possessions; there was theft, forgery, obscenity and vulgarity; there was nonconformity to school rules, evidenced by disruption of classes, the throwing of food, the turning on of gas, interference with fire drills, as well as truancy and cutting of classes."³³

"It used to be that there were 'rough' schools and 'normal' schools; now there are difficult children in all schools, whether the setting be the slum or the suburb, and whether the class be kindergarten or high-school senior."³⁴

We are confronted even with

the perfectly ridiculous spectacle of the teacher being afraid of some of his pupils, whereas always in the past the situation had been the other way around. In some of our 'big city' schools, policemen have been stationed in the corridors in order to protect the teacher from his pupils, and the students from each other. Education languishes hopelessly in such an environment.³⁵

These are the ultimate in disciplinary problems, but lying within their confines are the myriad issues confronted daily by the teacher.

Perhaps it is as William Vantil says, "Our school discipline problems

³²John Manning, "Discipline in the Good Old Days," Phi Delta Kappan, XLI (December, 1959), p. 95.

³³H. Whitman, "New Way in School Discipline," Colliers, CXXIV (August 6, 1954), p. 60.

³⁴William C. Morse, "The School's Responsibility for Discipline," Phi Delta Kappan, XLI (December, 1959), pp. 109-113.

³⁵Rafferty, op. cit., p. 107.

grow out of a curriculum which does not make sense to the learner. A class in which academic content bears no relationship to the needs of the world of the learner is a breeding place for rebellious disturbances."³⁶

The blame for the discipline situation is assigned many and various interpretations. The biggest catch-all, however, seems to be progressive education.

Progressive education has become a synonym for all that is bad about our schools. Yet when my own children were young, some thirty or more years ago, progressive education was the new dispensation we were all supposed to acclaim with joy. Referring to an outstanding progressive private elementary school, time and again my friends would say, 'If only I could have attended such a school.' Today I hear my children's contemporaries condemning their own progressive education and preparing as parents to do their best to see that it doesn't happen to my children.³⁷

Max Rafferty, in his own inimitable style, says:

Things have changed of late in the field of discipline, and more than somewhat. They started to change at home first, back in the twenties and thirties. The prime mover in this change was the new psychology, which was widely publicized and which caused parents seriously to doubt their proper role vis-a-vis their children for the first time in the recorded history of the human race....Both Mom and Pop were told sternly to get out of the way and let their child express himself unless they wanted him to blame his parents in later life for the traumatic psychosis that were almost certain to crop up.

The result was the emergence of the least-repressed and worst behaved generation of youngsters this world has ever seen. Junior as a child played with toys but refused to put them away, threw the spinach on the floor but got the ice cream anyway, sassed his parents to their faces and got away with it. As a teen-ager, Junior stole the old man's whiskey and shared it with the gang, drag raced on the county highway at midnight with the family car, and told both the cop and the

³⁶William Vantil, "Better Curriculum - Better Discipline," NEA Journal, XLV (September, 1956), p. 345.

³⁷James B. Conant, Slums and Suburbs: A Commentary on Schools in Metropolitan Areas (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1961), p. 136.

judge to go to hell when he finally was hauled in. He feared nothing and respected nobody because he had never been compelled to do either. The psychologists had been right in one respect. Junior certainly had no repressions. He could have used a few.³⁸

School administrators have been allotted their share of the blame, too. "The administration uses activities, pseudo student government, contests, awards, and assemblies more as disciplinary palliatives than as worthwhile learning experiences. 'Trouble makers' are assigned to teachers who can best handle them. Certain subjects, shop, for example, become a dumping place for discipline problems."³⁹

Compulsory school attendance can also be noted as part of the problem. School is a requirement rather than a privilege.⁴⁰

The American way of life is another scapegoat. "Americans in general do not give their children the opportunity to develop themselves, parents over-indulge their children."⁴¹ We've been so anxious to give our children what we didn't have that we've failed to give them what we did.⁴²

Judge May Conway Kohler finds three main differences in the way Americans and Europeans approach the problem of discipline:

1. Americans are more hostile toward adolescents. One result is

³⁸Rafferty, op. cit., pp. 106-107.

³⁹Clark Robinson, "Order Thru Controlled Freedom," Journal of the National Education Association, XLIII (December, 1954), p. 544.

⁴⁰Vredevoe, op. cit., p. 218.

⁴¹Joseph A. Owens, "Montessori Moves In...", Columbia, XLI (September, 1961), p. 8.

⁴²McClelland, op. cit., p. 171.

that we do not plan for the problems of youth. The American juvenile is more likely to be out of control and in deep trouble before he gets any attention.

2. Americans seem almost obsessed with prolonging the childhood of adolescents. The European youth has an opportunity to participate in adult society at an earlier age and develops a sense of responsibility and a feeling of his own worth when he is much younger.

3. Europeans treating juvenile delinquency do not make a fetish of scientific methods. They improvise; they are willing to work with what is at hand because they do not have huge amounts of money. They do what the heart dictates. They are more flexible, less dogmatic and it appears, much more successful.⁴³

The size of the American system of education is another complication.

"The development of large impersonal academic institutions...in themselves create conditions in which irresponsible behavior, because it is anonymous, can corrupt moral development."⁴⁴

The home is a very vital out-of-school factor which affects the state of discipline in the school, also.⁴⁵ The Harris Poll, reported in a recent Life Magazine, related the existing tension between home and school. "Rules, order and discipline for their own sake, held far less appeal for teachers and administrators than for parents. An astonishing 62% of parents felt that maintaining discipline was a more important function of the schools than encouraging intellectual inquiry by students."⁴⁶

⁴³"Why Less Delinquency in Europe," Phi Delta Kappan, XLI (Dec., 1959), p. 93.

⁴⁴McClelland, op. cit., p. 169.

⁴⁵Sibbing, op. cit., p. 16.

⁴⁶Louis Harris, "The LIFE Poll - What People Think About Their High Schools," Life, LXVI (May 16, 1969), p. 29.

Although parents, according to the Harris Poll, favor firm disciplinary measures, "the traditional autocratic ways of raising children are no longer effective and are rapidly making their exits from the family scene."⁴⁷ This compounds the tension for the parents are thus asking the school to do what they the parents, are not doing.

One basic change which has taken place in education has been an increase in total concern for the child's behavior now delegated to the school....We became concerned about out-of-school behavior as well as in-school life. With this depth of involvement, discipline requires attention to all phases of the pupil's life, including the fundamental values which underlie behavior. Consequently, the school has been put in the position of creating the actual standard, sometimes in cooperation with the home, but many times in loco parentis. This indeed represents an educational revolution the implications of which we have largely failed to face.⁴⁸

The American social scene must also be called into play in describing the discipline in the schools.

It should always be remembered that delinquent behavior was frequently the only means open to certain children to call attention to needs which society had failed to meet....⁴⁹ The hates engendered in the heart and mind of the child cannot easily be erased or changed. The most likely place to develop these is under housing conditions which permit exploitation, filth, and crime. Sometimes the school is the first place where the individual comes in contact with those who represent the ones he blames and hates, although the recipients may be totally unaware of the reason for such acts and not guilty. Transference of⁵⁰ hate to other students may cause serious disciplinary problems.

⁴⁷Dale M. Baughman and Robert Eberle, "The Open Classroom - Guidelines for the Creative Teacher," The Clearing House, XXXIX (March, 1965), p. 389.

⁴⁸Morse, op. cit., p. 110.

⁴⁹McClelland, op. cit., p. 167.

⁵⁰Vredevoe, op. cit., p. 221.

"Few schools are organized today so that each youth may participate effectively. In the customary classroom, the shy child remains mute, the less inhibited joins energetically in classroom affairs, the aggressive demands his share and more of the teacher's time and attention. Individual differences appear, but too little is done to cope with them."⁵¹

In his tragic-comic description of his first year of teaching in a San Francisco inner city school, James Herndon relates more explicitly the plight of the child in the customary classroom who is

sitting in a classroom or at home, pretending to 'study' a badly written text full of false information, adding up twenty sums when they're all the same and one would do, being bottled up for seven hours a day in a place where he decides nothing, having his success or failure depend, a hundred times a day, on the plan, invention and whim of someone else, being put in a position where most of his real desires are not only ignored but actively penalized, undertaking nothing for its own sake but only for that illusory carrot of the future. Maybe he can do it, and maybe he can't, but either way, it's probably done him some harm.⁵²

The creative child suffers even more. Mead says that

the teacher is unprepared to cope with the child who uses his creativity to defeat her, the child who poses unanswerable questions which will arouse his classmates to raucous laughter. The teacher thus comes to distrust the upraised hand and the would be questioner.... This child is irritating because he deters us in our smooth way, halts us, and makes us turn in our tracks and search in ways which are new to us.⁵³

⁵¹Edmund Amidon and Ned Flanders, The Role of the Teacher in the Classroom (Minneapolis, Minn.: Paul S. Amidon, 1963), p. 282.

⁵²Herndon, op. cit., p. 188.

⁵³Ellis Paul Torrance, Rewarding Creative Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 44.

The polarity in beliefs concerning discipline is another stumbling block.

This country has been the repository of two very different beliefs about discipline. The Puritan concept of discipline was simple and severe and rested upon the assumption that children were 'innately depraved', that is, born with actively wicked tendencies. These tendencies were believed to endanger a person's chance for salvation and needed to be curbed and repressed by adults. Such beliefs indicated severe punishment for any infraction and a curriculum that attempted to inculcate Puritanical concepts of goodness.

The other orientation toward discipline may be traced to the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau and the practices of Heinrich Pestalozzi. Both men emphasized the natural, innate goodness of children and insisted that gentleness, permissiveness, and as little overt control as possible were essential to the successful education of children. Friedrich Froebel agreed and in his writings about early childhood education stressed the importance of kindness and persuasion.⁵⁴

Most American teachers have incorporated the beliefs of both extremes.

"Unfortunately, (1) American teachers are not aware of this; (2) teachers tend, unconsciously, to alternate between the two approaches, and (3) the result is that there is no authoritative body of guiding principles to direct teachers in matters of discipline."⁵⁵

What do these teachers, progressive, old-fashioned, or mixed, do to attain the modicum of control they desire in a classroom? There is not one answer, nor even a single method supported by many authors. A random selection of methods used currently is detention, denial of privileges,

⁵⁴Shermis and Kenney, op. cit., pp. 316-317.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 217.

suspension from school,⁵⁶ corporal punishment,⁵⁷ sarcasm,⁵⁸ threats,⁵⁹ awards and medals,⁶⁰ ridicule, scolding, criticism, extra school or homework, ostracism, and fines.⁶¹

Most of these entail some form of punishment. Dr. Noel Smith, with tongue in cheek, says, "Punishment is so widely held to be necessary as a means of control and is so frequently applied that if it were effective we would have a utopian society with little misbehavior. Criminals, juvenile delinquents, recalcitrant children, and you and I would tow the line."⁶²

A revolution in classroom discipline, beginning in about 1935, has swept American schools.⁶³ From the selected quotations in this chapter, it is plain to see that it is serious. That it will become more acute during the next decade is attested to by L. L. Vredevoe in the conclusions of his recent study:

The problem of school discipline will become more acute in many communities and schools during the next decade as a result of the following:

⁵⁶Rafferty, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

⁵⁷Sam Lambert, "What a National Survey of Teachers Reveals About Pupil Behavior," Journal of the National Education Association, XLV (Sept., 1956), p. 341.

⁵⁸Vantil, op. cit., p. 345.

⁵⁹Redl and Wattenberg, op. cit., p. 345.

⁶⁰Sibbing, op. cit., p. 8.

⁶¹B.F. Skinner, "Why Teachers Fail," Saturday Review, XLVIII (Oct., 1965), p. 81.

⁶²Noel Smith, "Discipline...How and When," Children's House, II (Winter, 1968), p. 6.

⁶³Ausubel, op. cit., p. 26.

1. The necessity for every boy or girl to obtain a high school diploma in order to obtain any type of permanent employment in the future. The holding power of the schools will not reflect the desire or interest of some of the students, but their recognition that they must have a diploma or certificate of completion of high school. This will keep in school a large number of those who in the past did not stay and really do not care to stay now.

2. The expansion of our secondary schools into large institutions in which students will be administered rather than guided by teachers who really know or understand them because of close association in class or small homeroom groups. Factors which will have a tendency to increase the size of secondary schools are the rising cost and availability of land and also the increase of the population density in certain areas.

3. The confusion about the standards which should be maintained relative to behavior of adolescents in or out of school.

4. The increasing lack of respect for laws and regulations and those responsible for enforcing them.

5. The increased unemployment among youth and lack of opportunity to get an honest-to-goodness job or work before the age of 18. Closely associated to this is the waste of human resources by keeping youth from the labor market or opportunity to get part time or real work experience.

6. The increased need for things and opportunities and less of a chance to earn money to pay for them.

7. The discontent, bitterness, and resentment on the part of those who recognize that their chances will be more and more limited because of the demands for better trained and qualified employees.

8. The great pressures upon getting a college education and feeling a failure or being a second class citizen if you don't. We are failing to recognize that education is more than college degrees and units of credit.

9. The increasing attitude of teachers that status depends upon whom you teach, what you teach, and where you teach. Students who need certain classes and experiences are not electing them because of their status in the eyes of parents, administrators, and teachers. Too many of us think that such classes are just what is needed for somebody else or their neighbor's children, but beneath the dignity of ours.

10. The automobile, which gives a wide range for youth to roam and a private room on wheels. Many of the incidents associated with some schools have not been instigated by their students or students of any school, but rather by a roving, roaming, and careless type of youth. The automobile is here to stay, and the problems associated with school discipline because of it will increase, not diminish.

11. The failure of some teachers and schools to make the work challenging or meaningful.

12. The stimulation of students by individuals and groups to defy authority and to associate their lack of ability and status with a

hate imagery which usually includes those who seem to have what they want.⁶⁴

It is into this "muddle" that we bring the principles of Maria Montessori. She lived and worked in the first half of the century when the tempo of the times was accelerating but had certainly not reached the present velocity. It appears, though, that her principles are applicable because "human nature remains fairly constant and if the pluses and minuses are balanced, today's youngsters are about the same as those of the last hundred years or more."⁶⁵

An Application of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline

The amount of available empirical data to support the application of the Montessori Theories to the contemporary classroom is meagre. This is because it is "highly questionable to what extent valid objective data are obtainable and even relevant in matters of discipline."⁶⁶ It is almost impossible to describe and explain the outside forces that contribute to misbehavior,⁶⁷ and, also, any empirical test...would have to be conducted over such an extended period of time that its conclusions would tend to be rendered obsolete by intervening changes in significant social conditions."⁶⁸

Empirical data is used, when it is available, to substantiate the following applications. The literature concerning discipline, being predominantly

⁶⁴Vredevoe, op. cit., pp. 215-216.

⁶⁵Sibbing, op. cit., p. 14.

⁶⁶Ausubel, op. cit., p. 27.

⁶⁷Gnagey, Controlling Classroom Misbehavior, op. cit., p. 4.

⁶⁸Ausubel, op. cit., p. 27.

descriptive and theoretical,⁶⁹ is used in addition to and in place of empirical data in many cases.

Mary Blackburn, as early as 1921, expressed the feasibility of the Montessori Theories having applications outside the confines of the Children's Houses in which they were first practiced. "Is it necessary that they should all do exactly the same as she has done? Is it not conceivable that the great Montessori principles...may have to fulfil themselves in many ways?"⁷⁰

It is with this thought that we proceed to an application of the great Montessori principles to the classroom of today.

The child is a man deserving of the deepest respect.

"Proper discipline is based on giving each child the same consideration we would give to an adult."⁷¹ It is nothing short of disastrous for the war between the generations to penetrate into the classroom.⁷² "Society, whether it be of the classroom or the larger community, must respect the uniqueness of its individual members,"⁷³ whether these members be its very youngest or its eldest.

The teacher, to adequately display this respect, must be both warm and

⁶⁹Louis Harris, op. cit., p. 382.

⁷⁰Blackburn, op. cit., p. 10.

⁷¹Victoria Wagner, "Self-discipline is the Best Discipline," NEA Journal, XLVIII (October, 1959), p. 42.

⁷²Don Dinkmeyer, Encouraging Children to Learn (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 119.

⁷³Amos and Orem, "Discipline: Some Definitions, Dimensions and Directions," op. cit., p. 5.

dignified.⁷⁴ Genuine courtesy in human relationships is also a very positive way of assuming the inherent right of children to receive the consideration to which they are entitled.⁷⁵ When a child is accorded this type of treatment he takes pride in his own growth as those who accord him this treatment take pride in it,⁷⁶ destroying exaggerated emphasis on status differences.⁷⁷ "The average child is not born a cripple, or a souless automaton, but has full potentialities to love life."⁷⁸ This is notwithstanding race, color, creed, or class.

In respecting the child the teacher should, lastly, recognizing the "fact that each child is unique, be glad to have the daily opportunity of enjoying the expression and development of this uniqueness."⁷⁹ In so doing she would be lessening the pressures of conforming as much as possible.

Earl C. Kelly says that the schools must give up the idea that they can produce stereotypes. "It is as though they would repel uniqueness, which

⁷⁴Baughman and Eberle, op. cit., p. 390. ⁷⁵Ausubel, op. cit., p. 26.

⁷⁶Kenneth Brill and Ruth Thomas, Children in Homes (London: Victor Gallancz, 1965), p. 93.

⁷⁷Ausubel, op. cit., p. 28.

⁷⁸A. S. Neill, Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing (New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1960), p. XII.

⁷⁹Ellis Paul Torrance, Rewarding Creative Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 22.

nature has gone to so much trouble to establish."⁸⁰

Application of this first principle of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, then, would be based on the following criteria:

1. The teacher should accord the child as well as the adult genuine courtesy and consideration.
2. The teacher should protect the uniqueness of the child by limiting the pressures of conforming as much as possible.
3. The teacher should relate to the children in a warm and dignified manner.

The child has within himself a power which governs his inner life and which forces his own expansion.

"The child's original nature, if not interfered with, will find its own way to worthy maturity. The child...contains within itself irrepressible tendencies to expand, to develop, to master its environment, to enter into relationships with its fellows. These inner factions of growth are essential factors in education."⁸¹

These inner factions which are so essential can be destroyed in a system that confines the human spirit, that breeds robots.⁸²

"Each child needs to have a respected place in the group; he needs to

⁸⁰Frederick M. Raubinger and Harold G. Rowe, The Individual and Education; Some Contemporary Issues (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 3.

⁸¹Edward Reisner, The Evolution of the Common School (New York: Macmillan Co., 1930), p. 446.

⁸²Wagner, op. cit., p. 43.

have time for making choices, time for being on his own, time for accepting responsibility, time for carrying out plans, time for some-day dreaming." He also needs space in the day for planning, space for working, space for moving about...and space in the hearts of those to whom he looks for love and understanding."⁸³

"There are too many influences bombarding children today which they can't escape - violence and persuasion on TV right in their living rooms, the pressures of competition throughout society - and they've no retreat in which they can just be children. There are no closets to hide in in a small apartment and grandmothers usually live too far away. The schools have to become a haven in which children can be children,"⁸⁴ havens in which they can experience what it is to know themselves.⁸⁵

"It is a sign of emerging independence when a child learns how to be happy when alone."⁸⁶ In this aloneness he needs support, stimulation and encouragement, rather than controls and specifications,⁸⁷ assuming an independent responsibility as his growing powers permit it.⁸⁸ He gradually

⁸³Edna Harrell Lawson, "Road to Self-Discipline," NEA Journal, XLV (January, 1956), p. 14.

⁸⁴Barbara Villet, "The Children Want Classrooms Alive with Chaos," Life LXVI (April 11, 1969), p. 56.

⁸⁵Herb Snitzer, Summerhill - A Loving World (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1964), p. 1.

⁸⁶Katherine Berle Stains, "Through Independence to Discipline," Grade Teacher, LXXVI (April, 1959), p. 91.

⁸⁷Faughman and Eberle, op. cit., p. 389.

⁸⁸Robert F. Peck, "The Forgotten Purpose of Discipline," Grade Teacher LXXVI (April, 1959), p. 99.

realizes that the primary purpose of his presence in school is to develop his talents to their fullest capacity, with the responsibility for doing this placed immediately upon him."⁸⁹

Historically, the possibility of the child accepting this much responsibility has been made an improbability by "commitment to traditional authorities and restraints."⁹⁰ It is, however, still a distinct possibility.

Application of the second principle of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, then, would be based on the following criteria:

1. The teacher must provide time and space for aloneness so that the child can experience what it is to know himself.
2. The teacher must provide support, stimulation and encouragement to the resulting independence.

Nature imposes on the child the task of growing up, and his will leads him to make progress in developing his powers.

"The road of life is impulse; and its release in the proper amounts, at the proper time and place, and in culturally approved forms"⁹¹ is a primary concern of education. That the capacity to restrain this impulse matures from

⁸⁹B. Frank Brown, "The Non-Graded School," Children's House, II (Fall, 1967), p. 13.

⁹⁰Kenneth Benne, Education in the Quest for Identity and Community (Columbus: College of Education, Ohio State University, 1962), p. 3.

⁹¹Jules Henry, "The Problem of Spontaneity, Initiative and Creativity in Suburban Classrooms," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, XXIX (April, 1959), p. 266.

birth on is one of the most striking factors about human development.⁹² The structures ensuring this restraint develops within the human personality. They "grow out of the child's need to protect himself. He learns very early that he will hurt himself if he acts purely on impulse."⁹³

Confusion reigns, however, in the differentiation between impulse and the compelling force within the child "seeking to repeat the satisfactory experience of coming to know one's self." It is John Goodlad who decries the pressures to please and pressures to cover that destroy this compelling force.⁹⁴

For many children the appetite for learning is destroyed in this atmosphere⁹⁵ in which what is considered a disturbing impulse may actually be a very healthy action. It is, perhaps, we "who are the ones who need to change our standards, our expectations...."⁹⁶ We organize formal systems of education and, in doing so, quite often spoil the original, intuitive, spontaneous, imaginative things which the youngsters have in them."⁹⁷

⁹²Brill and Thomas, op. cit., p. 92.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Raubinger and Rowe, op. cit., p. 184.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 201

⁹⁶James L. Hymes, "Something is Wrong Some Place," NEA Journal, XLV (September, 1956), p. 344.

⁹⁷Raubinger, op. cit., p. 5.

The climate which should be fostered is one in which the inner-directed person "takes his signals from within himself. He is competing with himself, and not with others, so that standards are actually relative to the individual. Critical thinking is fostered because the process is inductive. It is a search."⁹⁸

In such a climate the inner-directed, creative and self-motivated child is developed. In such a situation it is not only the teacher who knows what is to be done and why.⁹⁹ In such a setting the child feels a sense of responsibility in what to him is a very significant situation.¹⁰⁰

Application of the third principle of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, then, would be based on the following criteria:

1. The teacher should differentiate between impulse, which is controlled as the child matures, and the compelling force within the child to know himself and that which is outside himself.

3. The teacher should foster a climate in which the child, competing with himself, knows what is to be done and why, while feeling a sense of responsibility in what is to him a very significant situation.

⁹⁸Mario Fantani, "Opens vs. Closed Classrooms," Clearing House, XXXVII (October, 1962), p. 69.

⁹⁹Anne Hoppock and Daisy Bortz, "Operating a Free but Disciplined Classroom," NEA Journal, LI (October, 1962), p. 21.

¹⁰⁰Chester Harris, op. cit., p. 383.

The teacher is an observer of children for whom she must have a deep respect and love.

"Many teachers find threatening anything other than an authority relationship with a child. Some cannot tolerate an individual relationship with a child. The relationship must be kept on a safe, group basis."¹⁰¹

This is a devastating situation for actually the only starting point from which progress can be made "is an awareness on the part of the teacher of the existing feelings, tastes, judgments and attitudes"¹⁰² of each of his pupils, as well as of their social background and its effects.¹⁰³ The teacher must also overcome the tendency to "overlook the problem of the withdrawn child in favor of the child who forces himself upon the teacher because of the disciplinary problems he creates."¹⁰⁴

Relative to this, "quite a few people fear that too much understanding of children will make them weak, incapable of maintaining discipline. It is true that when we understand children, it is hard to maintain previously blind harshness. However, the knowledge may help us act more wisely, and need not lead to indecision."¹⁰⁵

In an effort to help realize this understanding, a teacher is reported to have conducted child-teacher conferences before every parent-teacher

¹⁰¹Torrance, op. cit., p. 42.

¹⁰²Stenhouse, op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁰⁴Ewing Lakin Phillips, Discipline Achievement and Mental Health: A Teacher's Guide to Wholesome Action (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1960), p. 9.

¹⁰⁵Redl and Wattenberg, op. cit., p. 39.

conference.¹⁰⁶ This awareness, she discovered, prevented stereotyping youngsters as belligerent, uncontrollable or "extremely difficult".¹⁰⁷

Since all behavior is caused, the teacher should not be angered by a child who misbehaves but should rather try to find the causes back of the behavior. "We must help the child understand himself, bring his inner feelings out into the light and lead him into ways of handling these feelings."¹⁰⁸ The child's image of himself is reflected in his behavior.¹⁰⁹ The teacher should ideally represent a force for fostering a positive and realistic self-concept among his students.¹¹⁰ She should do this with an almost quiet omniscience.¹¹¹ So much so, that forty children in a class is better than thirty or twenty because it prevents the child from becoming too conscious of the teacher's presence.¹¹²

Teachers generally do not understand the power of their evaluative behavior over their pupils.¹¹³ A very sympathetic understanding is necessary so that the children know she is their friend "and will never withdraw her

¹⁰⁶Hoppock and Bortz, op. cit., p. 22.

¹⁰⁷Joel Marcus, Martha Richardson, Jenny Gray, "Discipline Problems," NEA Journal, LVI (December, 1967), p. 60.

¹⁰⁸Lawson, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁰⁹Amos and Orem, Managing Student Behavior, op. cit., p. 25.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 28.

¹¹¹Villet, op. cit., p. 56.

¹¹²Montessori and Claremont, op. cit., p. 422.

¹¹³Torrance, op. cit., p. 19.

affection, even though she may not approve of some of their behavior."¹¹⁴ The problem with children is minimal "when we treat them right."¹¹⁵

Treating them right means recognizing their individual differences.

"Since self-control is learned and all pupils have not had the same learning experiences, some students will have developed less skill in self-direction than others. It is just as important to recognize and care for individual differences in this learning as it is in arithmetic or English."¹¹⁶

The teacher needs to gather information about each child, his physical needs, "particularly his energy output and tendency to fatigue." Provisions and activities must then be planned to meet his needs.¹¹⁷

Aristotle said, "It is deep rooted that we can teach only those we love."¹¹⁸ When this is lacking it is very often because the teacher displays in place of love, "lack of interest, antagonism, weakness, some miscarriage of justice, favoritism, or a big-pal attitude."¹¹⁹

The observer teacher is marked by gentleness. "Gentleness attracts, violence repels; gentleness leads, violence drives. Gentleness is as charming

¹¹⁴Lawson, op. cit., p. 13.

¹¹⁵Darrach, op. cit., p. 61.

¹¹⁶Robinson, op. cit., p. 544.

¹¹⁷S.K. Richardson, "Discipline from Within," Grade Teacher, LXXVI (April, 1959), p. 90.

¹¹⁸Sister Denice, "Psychological Principles of Discipline," Catholic School Journal, LI (September, 1951), p. 245.

¹¹⁹Sibbing, op. cit., p. 14.

and soft as the kiss of a zephyr, violence is as terrible as the storm....To this must be united firmness. Firmness is as essential as gentleness. So these two virtues acting in harmony should result in such culture as would be felt for generations to come."¹²⁰

Application of the fourth principle of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, then, would be based on the following criteria:

1. The teacher should make a studied effort to come to an awareness of the feelings, tastes, attitudes and social background of each child.
2. The teacher should quietly observe individual differences seeking constantly to provide ways in which each unique child can improve his self-concept.
3. The teacher's role as observer should be marked by gentleness and firmness.

The teacher does not impart what is hers but rather develops that which is within the child.

"What a dangerous activity...teaching is. All this plastering on of foreign stuff. Why plaster on at all when there's so much inside already? So much locked in."¹²¹

¹²⁰R.H. Rivers, "Moral Training," Proceedings, NEA (1877), pp. 181-182.

¹²¹Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Teacher (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), p. 14.

In the spring of 1962 Lounsbury and Marani sampled the experiences of 102 eighth graders in 98 schools in 26 states. An overwhelming conclusion was that "teachers seem to be 'telling' information to the students rather than helping them find it themselves."¹²²

As a solution to this problem, Postman and Weingartner, perhaps facetiously, offer two suggestions:

"1. Limit each teacher to three declarative sentences per class, and fifteen interrogatives.

2. Prohibit teachers from asking any questions they already know the answer to."¹²³

Students must be given the opportunity to develop the skill of individual study.¹²⁴ In this regard, interesting materials of a self-correcting nature give the student immediate feedback regarding his performance and free the teacher to work with individual problems.¹²⁵

The teacher is not the source of "truth". It happens that as long as the student complies with the values and standards the teacher has imposed, "he will gain status and recognition and thereby succeed. The ironic aspect here

¹²²Baughman and Eberle, op. cit., p. 388.

¹²³Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, Teaching as a Subversive Activity (New York: Delacorte Press, 1969), p. 138.

¹²⁴J. Lloyd Trump and Dorsey Baynham, Focus on Change: Guide to Better Schools (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1961), p. 5.

¹²⁵Amos and Orem, "Discipline: Some Definitions, Dimensions, and Directions," op. cit., p. 6.

is that we are making conformists of bright students....Some will rebel against the system These become 'outsiders' and usually fail."¹²⁶

The teacher should rather be the director of learning activities. The tools of learning should be in view and their function and use known to all. She should be "more a helper than a yelper; more a diagnostician than a critic; more a praiser than an appraiser; more a coach than a referee; and more a supporter than an examiner."¹²⁷

Force, threat, and pressure as commonly used teaching tools become obsolete and the teacher must psychologically see herself in a "helping role."¹²⁸ Her success in this role depends greatly on the degree to which "she feels secure in her own life and therefore does not perceive pupil creativity and achievement as a threat to her authority or to her ego."¹²⁹

As the children begin to produce, they can be easily discouraged if the teacher immediately begins to impose her own standards.¹³⁰ A child has such natural endowments that it is really only necessary to bring him into contact with the world he is to learn about in order for him to begin the learning process. "A child sees things and talks about them accurately afterward. He

¹²⁶Fantani, op. cit., p. 68.

¹²⁷Baughman and Eberle, op. cit., pp. 390-391.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 389.

¹²⁹David A. Goslin, The School in Contemporary Society (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1965), p. 97.

¹³⁰Hoppock and Bortz, op. cit., p. 21.

listens to news and gossip and passes it along. He recounts in great detail the plot of a movie he has seen or a book he has read. He seems to have a 'natural curiosity,' a 'love of knowledge,' and an 'inherent wish to learn.'¹³¹

The normal individual, therefore, given an appropriate environment, is capable of much self-teaching or "auto-education".¹³² He should not merely be exposed to the "spongelike soaking up and squeezing out of content"¹³³ presented in an authoritarian manner by a teacher.

Application of the fifth principle of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, then, would be based on the following criteria:

1. The teacher should not pose as the source of truth but should rather, as a director of learning activities, assume a helping role.
2. The teacher should not impose her own standards but should rather respect and develop the child's natural curiosity, love of knowledge and inherent wish to learn.

The teacher must exercise restraint, so much so, that when the child has begun to concentrate she does not interrupt him, and, in fact, treats him as if he does not exist.

"Students need opportunities to develop the inquiring mind. Today's instruction may even have the opposite effect. The pupil works his way through a school assignment, shuts the book, and moves on in the ordered regularity of

¹³¹Skinner, op. cit., p. 99.

¹³²Amos and Orem, Managing Student Behavior, op. cit., p. 22.

¹³³Baughman and Eberle, op. cit., p. 389.

his schedule. Any lingering words, any curiosity, is buried under the necessity to turn to other work."¹³⁴

The teacher should protect the child from unwarranted intrusion upon the process and products of his learning.¹³⁵ For the traditional teacher, this does not provide much satisfaction. This teacher feels more rewarded in having covered a given body of subject matter and in testing the student to see what he has learned.¹³⁶ This highly authoritarian relationship between teacher and pupil is detrimental to student activity.¹³⁷

The best kind of discipline is achieved when children are deeply absorbed in their work. In a sense, the task imposes the discipline. Children act up when they are bored; stay busy when they see sense in what they are doing.¹³⁸ They come into direct contact with content and are thus freed from immobilization for long teacher lectures.¹³⁹ Although they sometimes participate in group lessons and projects, they become capable of spending much of their time working alone, each at his own pace, each competing with himself. The right of the learner to the privacy needed for concentration and task completion is what the teacher must acknowledge and respect.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴Trump and Dorsey, op. cit., p. 5.

¹³⁵Amos and Orem, "Discipline: Some Definitions, Dimensions, and Directions," op. cit., p. 6.

¹³⁶Fantani, op. cit., p. 71.

¹³⁷Goslin, op. cit., p. 96.

¹³⁸Hoppock and Bortz, op. cit., p. 21.

¹³⁹Amos and Orem, Managing Student Behavior, op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 18.

Application of the sixth principle of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, then, would be based on the following criterion:

The teacher should protect the child from unwarranted intrusion upon the process and products of his learning rather than cover a test or a given body of subject matter.

Obedience is an instinct which must be cultivated through the gentle training of the will.

The short-term aim is to control children so that they do not interfere with our efforts to make them behave as we want, right here and now. While justifications for this endeavor can be rationalized in all sorts of ways - and are everyday - by us all-too-human adults there is a grave and obvious flaw at the very heart of this if it is allowed to be the chief element in our handling of children. It makes the child's will a disruptive and unwanted element if it departs in any particular from the adult's will. Only a short extension of this reasoning is required to make the child's will a thing to be either stamped out of existence or broken to acquiescence in every rule and every act the adult wishes to enforce.

The more intense the struggle is made between the adult and the child, the more it produces a child who, in learning from the powerful example of the adult, will strive to override the will of others and autocratically impose...his every selfish whim and personal desire. In fact the child will increase his resistance to the adult's will in direct proportion to the degree of effort the adult is exerting to replace the child's will with his own.¹⁴¹

The adult is the older, stronger being, however, and sometimes he is able to overcome the child, sometimes he is able to force him into compliance. Consequently, these children grown to adulthood are the "sheep-like compliers who made possible the rise of Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin, despite the small minority of active supporters these self-appointed autocrats boasted at first."¹⁴²

¹⁴¹Rock, op. cit., p. 57.

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 96.

Instead of demanding unquestioning acquiescence the school should help the children adjust to the structures of formal rules and regulations, but it is healthful, in doing this, to retain some of the "characteristics of the informal family group in which considerable deviance is usually allowed."¹⁴³

A very elementary method of will training is to teach the child to carry through to completion. "A child starting with 'simple' tasks should learn to finish what he has begun."¹⁴⁴

Adults have no inherent right to the obedience of children.¹⁴⁵ They should repress only the behavior which imperils the personality of the youngster, rather than that which is simply annoying to the school.¹⁴⁶

In training the will the teacher must remember that

education is not primarily concerned with the production of knowledge containers, nor skill manipulations, but with the making of men and women who know how to live abundantly, whose behavior is not random, destructive, driven by changing appetites, but purposeful, constructive and freely and responsibly chosen according to values which are personally held.¹⁴⁷

Application of the seventh principle of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, then, would be based on the following criteria:

1. The teacher should not consider the child's will to be a disruptive and unwanted element to be stamped out of existence or broken to unquestioning

¹⁴³Ceslin, op. cit., p. 72.

¹⁴⁴Anos and Oren, "Discipline: Some Definitions, Dimensions, and Directions," op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁴⁵Neill, op. cit., p. 156.

¹⁴⁶Redl and Wattenberg, op. cit., p. 108.

¹⁴⁷McClelland, op. cit., p. 168.

acquiescence, but rather as a positive force which should gently be trained to adjust to the structures of formal rules and regulations.

2. The teacher does not have an inherent right to the child's obedience and should therefore ask for it only in relation to actions which imperil the youngster, or the group.

3. The teacher should recall that education is not so much concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and skills, but rather with the making of men and women who know how to live abundantly, whose behavior is not random, destructive or driven by changing appetites.

The teacher must prepare the environment in which concentration can be begun and carried out and in which the will can be gently trained.

"A good learning environment is the basis of good order."¹⁴⁸

The creation of such an environment "involves a great deal of guidance as is indicated by the following characteristics identified by Ferebee:

1. Building an atmosphere of receptive listening.
2. Relieving the fears of the timid and the overtaught.
3. Fending off negative criticism.
4. Making children aware of what is good.
5. Stirring the sluggish and deepening the shallow.
6. Making sure that every sincere effort, however, poorly executed, brings enough satisfaction to the child to enable him to want to try again.
7. Heightening sensory awareness.
8. Keeping alive zest in creative activity.
9. Being wise enough to halt the activity temporarily when creativity runs thin.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸Robinson, op. cit., p. 515.

¹⁴⁹Torrance, op. cit., p. 21.

Built into all of these recommendations are a certain set of limits, depending on the age of the child. As the child becomes old enough to predict the outcome of his behavior he assumes a greater responsibility in relation to it.¹⁵⁰

The notion of limits is related to that of consistency. "No student should be in doubt for even a brief time as to what he is to do."¹⁵¹ What is essential is that...a clearly recognizable standard be maintained.¹⁵² This is what distinguishes a powerful learning environment from one that is only moderate or ineffectual in its consequences for the students."¹⁵³

The environment bearing the above characteristics must contain materials to give direction to the child's learning. The children cannot do this by themselves. If they could, schools would not be necessary. "The environment must be a 'prepared' one, scientifically designed to enhance the learners' fullest physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual development. Such an environment must feature the challenges of a wide variety of tasks to engage each learners' attention and interest."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰Wagner, op. cit., p. 42.

¹⁵¹Amos and Orem, Managing Student Behavior, op. cit., p. 42.

¹⁵²Robinson, op. cit., p. 91.

¹⁵³Benjamin Bloom, Stability and Change in Human Characteristics (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), p. 195.

¹⁵⁴Phillips, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁵⁵Amos and Orem, Managing Student Behavior, op. cit., p. 19.

The environment, too, must have built into it opportunities for making and correcting mistakes.

Since exploration necessarily involves trial, practice, seeking, striving, and pushing into new and unknown areas, it is bound to result in frequent error. Therefore a learning situation which regards mistakes as affronts against God and man is hardly likely to encourage the exploration of meaning. Personal meaning can only be discovered in settings wherein one has the opportunity, indeed even the right, to make mistakes. An educational setting which cannot tolerate or permit mistakes imposes severe limits upon the freedom with which students can explore their own perception.¹⁵⁶

"Discovery is maximally possible within an environment that values the individual, and within curricular experiences that provide for uniqueness of response, and for exploration and discovery."¹⁵⁷

For the children to do this creating and discovering, the environment must be an ordered one. "Order brings freedom to create. To the degree an environment is chaotic, to that degree it is a negatively controlling one."¹⁵⁸ What the child should receive above all is calm. Agitation dissipates and fatigues.¹⁵⁹ If there is not enough redundancy and regularity, as a basis upon which the individual can learn to make effective decisions, then the environment controls the individual and limits his functioning."¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶Ronald C. Doll (ed.), Individualizing Instruction, ASCD Yearbook (Washington, D.C.: ASCD, 1964), p. 90.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., p. 97.

¹⁵⁸Amos and Orem, "Discipline: Some Definitions, Dimensions, and Directions," op. cit., pp. 5-6.

¹⁵⁹Helene Lubienka, "The Child, His Body and His Soul," Jubilee, V (June, 1957), p. 37.

¹⁶⁰Amos and Oren, "Discipline: Some Definitions, Dimensions, and Directions," op. cit., p. 5.

R. Buckminster very correctly said, "I made up my mind...that I would never try to reform man, that's too difficult. What I would do was to try to modify the environment in such a way as to get man moving in preferred directions. It's like the principle of a ship's rudder."¹⁶¹

For the varying age, the modifications of the environment differ. For young children a very fine possibility follows:

On the first day, she had many things around the room to tempt them to explore and think. Next to the aquarium and terrarium the children found books on how to start such projects. A book on animals of the seashore was placed near a cluster of sea shells. Miniature animals and birds, a little squirrel and its babies, a tiny sea gull, invited handling. Hobby books of various kinds were grouped on a rack with books on how to do such things as science experiments without bought equipment. Easels and a typewriter were available for use.¹⁶²

"Within an age range of three years there is no need to grade children by ability. The backward and the brilliant work happily side by side. Not I.Q.'s but differences of interest separate the groups, for, given freedom, the natural grouping of mixed capacities is far more healthy than the segregated one."¹⁶³

Last but not least, within this environment, the children need time.

"Most of all they need time to wonder why and to seek answers in their complex world."¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹R.C. Orem, "Fuller, Montessori and the Child," National Catholic Kindergarten Review, XVII (December, 1967), p. 8.

¹⁶²Hoppock and Eorts, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁶³Montessori and Claremont, op. cit., p. 422.

¹⁶⁴Paubinger and Rowe, op. cit., p. IV.

Rudolph Dreikurs claims that there is little precedent in our traditional past for the type of environment described in these pages.¹⁶⁵

"In 1963, Baughman and Eberle visited nearly a hundred classrooms in thirty quality junior high schools in nine states. With a few exceptions the learning climates were deductive, content-bound, teacher dominated and routinized."¹⁶⁶ In such an environment a person soon learns it is better not to express his most precious ideas.¹⁶⁷

To prevent this, the application of the eighth principle of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, then, would be based on the following criteria:

1. The teacher should provide a prepared environment designed to enhance the learners' fullest development, featuring a wide variety of tasks to engage the learner's attention and interest.
2. The environment should be characterized by a certain set of limits and by consistency.
3. The environment should not only tolerate but should provide the opportunity for the child to make mistakes.
4. The environment should provide calmness for the child, for agitation dissipates and fatigues him, robbing him of the time he needs to wonder why and seek answers.

¹⁶⁵Baughman and Eberle, op. cit., p. 390.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 388.

¹⁶⁷Torrance, op. cit., p. 16.

5. The environment should provide for children of at least a three-year age span to work side by side, permitting natural grouping of mixed capacities. Discipline is an on-going process dependent on personal freedom.

"The true essence of liberty, which is indispensable to man, is the liberty to move and think at one's own individual pace."¹⁶⁸ Boys and girls, men and women do not have to be taught this.¹⁶⁹ It is human instinct.

"It is very easy for a skillful and devoted teacher to gain the whole world, in terms of effective learning, affection and exemplary behavior from his pupils, and yet to lose his own soul and to threaten theirs by failing to allow them the intellectual and emotional freedom to develop independence and responsibility."¹⁷⁰

When discipline is defined as the imposition of order by authorities, it involves interference with personal liberty and as such it always stands in need of justification.¹⁷¹ When it is defined and is that which is not primarily imposed from without but which develops from within each child as a result of careful nurturing it is justifiable.¹⁷²

When architect Walter Hill asked students aged, five to twelve, what they thought would make a good school, their answers included, "Make it so we can walk around because we were born free," and "put a sign on everything that

¹⁶⁸Labienska, op. cit., p. 39.

¹⁶⁹Bonne, op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁷⁰Stenhouse, op. cit., p. 38.

¹⁷¹Ibid., p. 163.

¹⁷²Wagner, op. cit., p. 42.

says Please Touch."¹⁷³

This becomes increasingly true in the upper grades, junior high school, and high school. "It is here that the growing need for freedom leads the student to seriously challenge the imposed controls which deny him the degree of freedom he demands."¹⁷⁴

It has to be the kind of discipline that works when no one is looking.¹⁷⁵ Father Vincent McNabb once wrote that "the most successful government is that which leads its subjects to the highest aim by means of the greatest freedom."¹⁷⁶

A. S. Neill points out that a grave problem lies in the distinction between freedom and license. In some cases the children have no rights, in other cases they have all the rights. He advocates that they have equal rights.¹⁷⁷

Research studies show that the effects of extreme permissiveness are just as unwholesome as those of authoritarianism.¹⁷⁸ A study, supported by the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, of 4,571 men, women and children between the ages of 13 and 65, concludes that the price of permissiveness is high. "If the adult is a teacher, she risks incurring the child's antipathy."¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³Villet, op. cit., p. 50.

¹⁷⁴Robinson, op. cit., p. 44.

¹⁷⁵Chester Harris, op. cit., p. 383. ¹⁷⁶McClelland, op. cit., p. 166.

¹⁷⁷A.S. Neill, Freedom not License (New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1966), p. 8.

¹⁷⁸Ausubel, op. cit., p. 30.

¹⁷⁹Benjamin Wright and Shirley Tuska, "The Price of Permissiveness," The Elementary School Journal, LXV (January, 1965), p. 182.

When a child spends much of his time in non-productive pursuits, freedom in the classroom has probably gone too far.¹⁸⁰ Freedom, over-extended, becomes license. License is interfering with another's freedom.¹⁸¹ A person who understands freedom should have the ability to think of other people.¹⁸²

Granted the need for not over-extending freedom, a basic principle of self-determination should still replace authoritarianism. The child should be taught without the use of force by appealing to his curiosity and spontaneous needs, thus getting him interested in the world around him.¹⁸³ The more interested he becomes the more competent he becomes. "Freedom is earned by competence and competence is attained through discipline."¹⁸⁴

Freedom and discipline are not only compatible, but are also inseparable and to operate effectively must be espoused by the entire faculty.

Where the head teacher approves and encourages, where a similar atmosphere has been experienced by the children up through the school and where the rooms on either side are engaged in similar activities is one thing. It is a very different proposition to achieve a similar atmosphere against even silent opposition from the head teacher, the ridicule of one's more experienced colleagues and in a school where neither free movement nor free speech has been the pattern to which the children have been accustomed.¹⁸⁵

Application of the ninth principle of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, then, would be based on the following criteria:

¹⁸⁰Phillips, op. cit., p. 43.

¹⁸¹Neill, Freedom not License, op. cit., p. 7. ¹⁸²Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁸³Neill, Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing, op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁸⁴Robinson, op. cit., p. 93.

1. The teacher must give the child the intellectual and emotional freedom necessary to develop independence and responsibility.

2. The teacher should realize that as the child grows older, a growing need for freedom leads him to seriously challenge imposed controls which deny the degree of freedom he demands.

3. The teacher should recognize that freedom is over-extended when the child spends much of his time in non-productive pursuits, or when he interferes with another's freedom.

4. The entire faculty must espouse the principle that freedom and discipline are inseparable, in order for it to be applied effectively.

Discipline is brought about through an inner force developed in the child by spontaneous interest in and concentration on an external object.

Discipline is "largely an individual process arising out of a learner's absorption in discovery and self-development."¹⁸⁶ To the extent that the students are 'caught up' in the curriculum, do they become self-disciplined.¹⁸⁷

"For me," says William Vantil, "it has been the less traveled way of achieving discipline through developing a curriculum relevant to learners."¹⁸⁸

The curriculum should, therefore, be so devised as to command the interest of the pupils.¹⁸⁹ The more appropriate it is to the intellectual needs of

¹⁸⁵Stenhouse, op. cit., p. 155.

¹⁸⁶Amos and Oren, "Discipline: Some Definitions, Dimensions, and Directions," op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁸⁷Shermis and Kenney, op. cit., p. 218.

¹⁸⁸Vantil, op. cit., p. 365.

¹⁸⁹Stenhouse, op. cit., p. 19.

the individual children, the fewer will be the discipline problems.¹⁹⁰

"Often conventional classrooms are not conducive to 'auto-education'. Instead the child must cope with the pressures generated by backstep curriculum and rigid scheduling."¹⁹¹

There is no reason why everyone should be interested in the geography of Venezuela on the same day, and hour unless there is some 'news' event there, such as a revolution. However, most of us are going to be interested in the geography of Venezuela at some time, our own time, but not all on the same day. Simultaneous curricula are obsolete. We must make all this information immediately available (over the two-way TV's), ready for the different human chromosomal ticker-tapes to call for it.¹⁹²

This will require a tremendous amount of programmed learning, so that when the "chromosomal ticker-tape" calls, the materials are available. It also automatically calls for ungradedness.

Such a program as this has been begun at Melbourne High School; B. Frank Brown reports that

one of the earliest observations of the effects of change was a difference in the attitude of the students toward learning. Almost overnight, students began to take the initiative for their education away from the teachers. Not only did their attitude toward learning improve, but their behavior at school underwent an amazing transformation. The need for teachers to monitor in the halls, the cafeteria, and the bus-loading areas diminished; finally this problem disappeared completely as an administrative function of the school. As scholarship began to slip out of the shadows, students started assuming greater responsibility for their conduct and teachers found themselves wisely using the left-over monitoring time to develop a better brand of education.

Student behavior and attitudes continued to change so greatly at Melbourne High that by the middle of the third year of gradeless education, the school was able to abandon its truancy regulations. The problem of truancy diminished to the point where it finally disappeared.

¹⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹⁹¹J.C. Owen and George L. Stevens, "Unintended and Language Development," *National Catholic Educational Review*, VIII (March, 1968), p. 30.

¹⁹²Owen, "Totter, Unintended and the Child," *op. cit.*, p. 4.

itself. The function of the Dean of Students shifted from one of disciplinary administration to counseling. There are still occasional discipline problems at Melbourne, but all of them originate in the classroom. The indication is strong that even these are generated by the teacher rather than the student.¹⁹³

All of this is achieved "over the bridge of interest, for only through interest can instruction set up ends for which the mind is willing to struggle."¹⁹⁴

Application of the tenth principle of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, then, would be based on the following criteria:

1. The teacher must realize that to the extent that the students are 'caught up' in the curriculum do they become self-disciplined.
2. The teacher must see that the curriculum is so devised as to command the interest of the learner.
3. The teacher must not require all of the students to be involved in the same activity at the same time.
4. The teacher must provide a plethora of materials, most of it programmed.

The child, internally responding to an external stimulus (work), learns to move about actively and purposefully, rather than wildly or mutely and apathetically.

According to Carl Rogers, "It is learning which makes the difference in the individual's behavior, in the course of action he chooses in the future, in his attitudes and in his personality. It is a pervasive learning which is

¹⁹³Ronald Gross and Judith Murphy, The Revolution in the School (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), pp. 113-114.

¹⁹⁴Francis Boylan, Conceptions of Discipline in the Public Schools of the U.S. for the Past 60 Years (Masters Thesis, Loyola University, 1932), p. 31.

not just an accretion of knowledge, but which interpenetrates with every portion of his existence."¹⁹⁵

When a person is ready to take over learning for himself he is truly an educated, disciplined individual.¹⁹⁶

The task of the teacher in relation to this is to assess what the student is capable of at a given moment and in a given area, and to motivate him successfully so that he achieves what he is capable of in this area.¹⁹⁷

The following should be the characteristics of the learning experiences the teacher should provide:

1. They relate closely to what the student knows and can do.
2. They relate closely to present interests and needs.
3. They allow for active participation and creative contributions by participants.
4. They have a substantial value or use - social, scholastic or economic.
5. They allow for originality - for dramatic or novel element - which will challenge or arouse curiosity.¹⁹⁸

One of the main characteristics of this inner discipline acquired through concentration on an external stimulus is that it carries over into unrelated behavior. Psychologists support this very practically by treating many misbehavior problems as special cases in faulty learning.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵Louise L. Tyler, "The Concept of an Ideal Teacher-Student Relationship," Journal of Educational Research, LVIII (Nov. 1964), p. 11.

¹⁹⁶Phillips, op. cit., p. 35.

¹⁹⁷Melitta Schmideberg, "Training for Responsibility," Phi Delta Kappan, XLI (December, 1959), p. 93.

¹⁹⁸Carl Baumgardner, "Some Elementary Principles of Discipline," School Review, LXIII (September, 1955), p. 347.

¹⁹⁹Gnagey, Controlling Classroom Misbehavior, op. cit., p. 17.

For the teacher who has depended upon imposed discipline, it becomes necessary that she learn to provide worthwhile learning experiences for each child, rather than those which best promise to maintain order.²⁰⁰

Application of the eleventh principle of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, then, would be based on the following criteria:

1. The teacher must strive to have the child take over his own learning by assessing what the student is capable of at a given moment and in a given area, and by successfully motivating him so that he achieves that of which he is capable.

2. The teacher must provide learning experiences that meet the need of each child, rather than those which best promise to maintain order.

The satisfaction found in the need to produce and perfect his own work is the child's inherent and only reward, a reward which eliminates the need for punishment.

"Educational research has shown repeatedly that people tend to learn and develop along whatever lines they find rewarding.²⁰¹ The learning and development itself is its own reward. Other rewards are superfluous and negative. To offer a prize for doing a deed is tantamount to declaring that the deed is not worth doing for its own sake."²⁰²

²⁰⁰Robinson, op. cit., p. 544.

²⁰¹Torrance, op. cit., p. 101.

²⁰²Neill, Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing, op. cit., p. 162.

If, for some reason the individual is not internally motivated to learn, the need appears for use of external forms of rewards and punishments as inducements.²⁰³ This is, in most cases, however, an admission of the teacher's failure.²⁰⁴

Many in the autocratic tradition, however, "still believe that we have to exert force to influence children; when they misbehave, we have to 'show' them, 'teach them a lesson,' repeatedly 'explain and advise,' but at any rate not 'let them get by with it,' without punishment and retaliation. Many sincerely believe that these methods have educational value, nay, are essential in bringing up children and teaching them."²⁰⁵

Researchers, however, have shown that while "punishment may suppress deviant behavior for a time, it does not weaken the bad habit....As soon as the class perceives that a substitute, for instance, will not punish them, deviances appear in profusion. Their tendencies to be deviant are still there, suppressed for a time but not extinct."²⁰⁶

When a child does show lack of control, as some do occasionally, "the teacher simply asks him to accompany her as she moves around the room until he thinks he is ready for freedom again. Children soon understand that freedom

²⁰³Amos and Orem, "Discipline: Some Definitions, dimensions, and Directions," op. cit., p. 6.

²⁰⁴Willard Abraham, A Time for Teaching (New York: Harper Row, 1964), p. 207.

²⁰⁵Dinkmeyer, op. cit., p. 118.

²⁰⁶Gnagey, op. cit., p. 23.

and responsibility go together."²⁰⁷

Very often the deed itself, the reality of the situation is sufficient admonishment. For instance, if a child fails to lock his bike and the bike is stolen, the result of the misdemeanor is an accusation in itself. To scold would only add resentment to the child's feelings.²⁰⁸

In conclusion, it is, therefore, the role of the teacher to help the children "acquire the kind of character which makes them want to act in the way they have to act as members of society."²⁰⁹ This should not be a painful, punitive operation but a rewarding challenge. For as Erich Fromm once wrote, "The aim of education - in fact the aim of life-is to work joyfully and to find happiness."²¹⁰

Application of the twelfth principle of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, then, would be based on the following criteria:

1. The teacher should realize that the need to use external forms of rewards and punishments is an admission of her failure.
2. The child who shows lack of control should be given special attention, often accompanying the teacher, until he is ready to accept the responsibility that parallels freedom.

²⁰⁷June Sark Heinrich, "The Montessori Approach to Education," SRA Teacher Education Extension Service, I (Dec., 1966), p. 22.

²⁰⁸Phillips, op. cit., p. 21.

²⁰⁹Fred Eggan, "An Anthropologist Looks at Discipline," Grade Teacher, LXXVI (April, 1959), p. 94.

²¹⁰Claudel Blackwood, "How Pinel School Breaks the Chains of Restrictive Education," Children's House, III (Summer, 1969), p. 7.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Through this study, the writer has attempted to compile and analyze the principles of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline, to examine these principles in the light of the writings concerning them, and to evaluate and apply them to the current scene using the available empirical and descriptive research concerning discipline.

The scope of the material was wide and varied. Most of the sources by and about Maria Montessori published in the United States, as well as English translations published in other countries were studied in order to make the paper as complete as possible. Empirical and descriptive research by writers in the United States in the last several decades was also examined in order to describe the present status of discipline and to evaluate and apply the derived theories to this status.

The writer hoped, as a result of the study, to be able to provide teachers with the principles of the Montessori Theory of Inner Discipline as well as information and suggestions for classroom use.

These principles and applications arrived at through the study appear now in summary.

The child is a man deserving of the deepest respect.

1. The teacher should accord the child the same genuine courtesy and consideration as that given an adult.
2. The teacher should protect the uniqueness of the child by limiting the pressures of conforming as much as possible.
3. The teacher should relate to the children in a warm and dignified manner.

The child has within himself a power which governs his inner life and which forces his own expansion.

1. The teacher must provide time and space for aloneness so that the child can experience what it is to know himself.
2. The teacher must provide support, stimulation and encouragement to the resulting emerging independence.

Nature imposes on the child the task of growing up and his will leads him to make progress in developing his powers.

1. The teacher should differentiate between impulse, which is controlled as the child matures, and the compelling force within the child to know himself and that which is outside himself.
2. The teacher should foster a climate in which the child, competing with himself, knows what is to be done and why, while feeling a sense of responsibility in what is to him a very significant situation.

The teacher is an observer of children for whom she must have a deep respect and love.

1. The teacher should make a studied effort to come to an awareness of the feelings, tastes, attitudes and social background of each child.

2. The teacher should quietly observe individual differences, seeking constantly to provide ways in which each unique child can improve his self-concept.

3. The teacher's role as observer should be marked by gentleness and firmness.

The teacher does not impart what is hers but rather develops that which is within the child.

1. The teacher should not pose as the source of truth but should rather, as director of learning activities, assume a helping role.

2. The teacher should not impose her own standards but should rather respect and develop the child's natural curiosity, love of knowledge and inherent wish to learn.

The teacher must exercise restraint, so much so that when the child has begun to concentrate she does not interrupt him, and, in fact, treats him as if he does not exist.

The teacher should protect the child from unwarranted intrusion upon the process and products of his learning rather than cover a test or given body of subject matter.

Obedience is an instinct which must be cultivated through the gentle training of the will.

1. The teacher should not consider the child's will to be a disruptive and unwanted element to be stamped out of existence or broken to unquestioning acquiescence, but rather as a positive force which should gently be trained to adjust to the structures of formal rules and regulations.

2. The teacher does not have an inherent right to the child's obedience and should therefore ask for it only in relation to actions which imperil the youngster or the group.

3. The teacher should recall that education is not so much concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and skills, but rather with the making of men and women who know how to live abundantly, whose behavior is not random, destructive, or driven by changing appetites.

The teacher must prepare the environment in which concentration can be begun and carried out and in which the will can be gently trained.

1. The teacher should provide a prepared environment designed to enhance the learner's fullest development, featuring a wide variety of tasks to engage each learner's attention and interest.

2. The environment should be characterized by a certain set of limits and by consistency.

3. The environment should not only tolerate but should provide the opportunity for the child to make mistakes.

4. The environment should provide calmness for the child, for agitation dissipates and fatigues him, robbing him of the time he needs to wonder why and seek answers.

5. The environment should provide for children of at least a three-year-age span to work side by side, permitting natural grouping of mixed capacities.

Discipline is an on-going process dependent on personal freedom.

1. The teacher must give the child the intellectual and emotional freedom necessary to develop the independence and responsibility.

2. The teacher should realize that as the child grows older, a growing need for freedom leads him to seriously challenge imposed controls which deny the degree of freedom he demands.

3. The teacher should recognize that freedom is over-extended when the child spends much of his time in non-productive pursuits, or when he interferes with another's freedom.

4. The entire faculty must espouse the principle that freedom and discipline are inseparable, in order for it to be applied effectively. Discipline is brought about through an inner force developed in the child by spontaneous interest in and concentration on an external object (work).

1. The teacher must realize that to the extent that the students are 'caught up' in the curriculum, do they become self-disciplined.

2. The teacher must see that the curriculum is so devised as to command the interest of the learner.

3. The teacher must not require all of the students to be involved in the same activity at the same time.

4. The teacher must provide a plethora of materials, most of it programmed.

The child, internally responding to an external stimulus (work), learns to move about actively and purposefully rather than wildly or mutely and apathetically.

1. The teacher must strive to have the child take over his own learning by assessing what the student is capable of at a given moment and in a given area, and by successfully motivating him so that he achieves that of which he is capable.

2. The teacher must provide learning experiences that meet the need of

each child, rather than those which best promise to maintain order.

The satisfaction found in the need to produce and perfect his own work is the child's inherent and only reward, a reward which eliminates the need for punishment.

1. The teacher should realize that the need to use external forms of rewards and punishments as inducements is an admission of failure.

2. The child who shows lack of control, should be given special attention, often accompanying the teacher, until he is ready to accept the responsibility that parallels freedom.

The scope and importance of each of these is of such magnitude that they merit further comprehensive study. It is the hope of the writer that teachers and administrators will be prompted, through this effort, to continue further inquiry.

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